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ABSTRACT

Home learning enablers (HLEs) are easy, carefully timed (5 to 10 minutes each), parent-child activities intended to encourage parents to learn to talk and interact with their children. The HLEs call for materials easily available in the home. Many were tested with 200 children in a pre- and post-test control group design; this study showed an IQ test score group increase of 8 points in two weeks. The first part of the volume contains nine sets of HLEs to be sent home with children from from 3 to 13 years of age. On each sheet, the title gives the content of the activity and a "why-do-it" section gives the objective or purpose of the activity. Also included are the necessary materials, time required, directions, evaluation tips, and harder or easier ideas related to the same activity. Parent letters and feedback sheets are also included. The second part contains 18 parent papers to be used as handouts or newsletter inserts. The first set tells parents what to expect from day care, preschool, or early childhood development programs; discusses the importance of reading and talking to young children; and suggests ways to develop the child's self-image. The second set covers helping the child develop self-control, using toys that teach, and understanding numbers. The third part contains 15 program enrichment papers, each of which features a subject matter, process, or activity curriculum approach. The fourth part consists of 14 volunteer program papers, including checklists, tips, and handouts designed for starting volunteer programs in child care centers and public schools. (TM)

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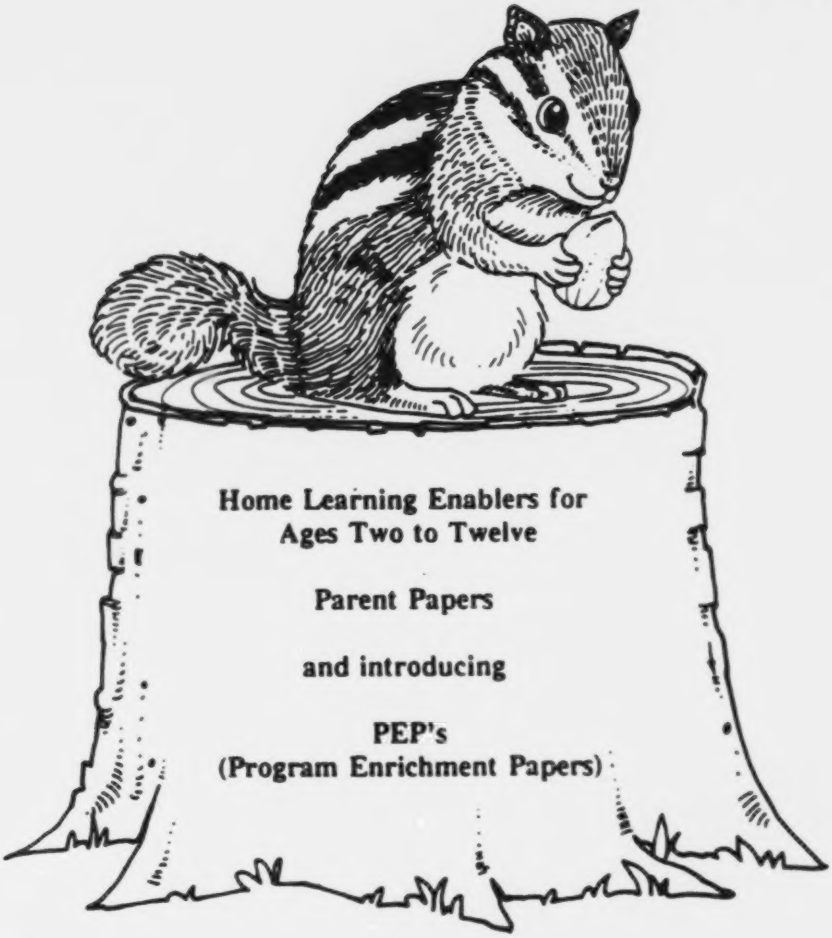
and OTHER HELPS



Home Learning Enablers for
Ages Two to Twelve

Parent Papers

and introducing

PEP's
(Program Enrichment Papers)

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Dear Colleague,

Thank you for your order. The ECEA Institute is pleased that these activities will be reaching your program's parents and children. We have enclosed additional brochures for you to share with friends.

Sincerely yours,

Cynthia Shoemaker
Cynthia Jones Shoemaker, Ph.D.
Executive Director

P.S. Be sure & use the Parent letter/Feedback Sheet on the back of each HLE sent home. These are found after pages 33, 47, 110, 114, 134.

Thank you,
CJS

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HOME LEARNING ENABLER PARENT INVOLVEMENT

In a review of 28 studies, it was found that in order to maintain the gains young children made in early childhood programs, parent involvement was a must. It was also found that if parents were given specific, curriculum-related activities in a sequence, these gains were maintained the most effectively. The following Home Learning Enabler (HLE) activities will help you provide just such a service to your parents (and your children), and also will help to insure a lasting effect for the efforts made at your center to really help children.

A summary of the five features that were evident in the 28 programs that showed immediate and lasting gains for children due to parent involvement includes:

1) The importance of the teacher to parent instruction phase in building trust.
2) The curricular emphasis in materials used for home teaching.
3) The ratio of parent to teacher for instruction in home teaching activities (one to one was best).
4) The structure (or sequence) of the home teaching activities, from easier to harder, was found to be of top importance for most stable gains.
5) The specificity or detail and definition of the home teaching activities.

The Home Learning Enabler series encompasses numbers two, four and five of these features that guarantee lasting effectiveness.

We are particularly proud of the Home Learning Enablers Set I which were related to significant IQ increase for users over non-users in a recent study of 127 three year old children at the 95 percent confidence level (60 treatment children and 67 control children). Our research showed gains of 1 to 36 IQ points for children using Home Learning Enablers Set I. The Stanford Binet IQ test was given to all of the 127 children before and after the 14 week period during which the treatment children received the HLE activities. We found children gained in IQ scores if the parents did just a few of the activities. We are projecting similar gains for children using HLE Set II for four and five year olds. The HLE attempt to encourage home learning instructional materials in the homes of children to prepare them for later school achievement is an outgrowth of studies done by Levenstein (1970) which suggested that mothers could be helped by an attractive, relatively simple means, to assume some responsibility for their preschool children's verbal growth. This is a relatively inexpensive form of encouraging parents' interaction with their own children, by sending home, weekly, one-page Home Learning Enabler activities which suggest brief, enjoyable parent-child interactions in the home. The learning occurs in the reciprocal process between mother and child which is the heart of this program.

There is obviously a need for bridging the gap between formalized learning at educational programs and informal learning opportunities that parents have at home. If educators need instructional materials, it is reasonable to assume that parents need materials too. There seems to be a need to encourage more parent-child interaction and verbal communication. The home learning activities described in this Appendix are designed to encourage verbal responses between parent and child. Using in-home materials the step-by-step Home Learning Enablers utilize household objects as systematic instructional materials.

Home Learning Enablers

Home Learning Enabler activities were developed and tested weekly with children in Title XX day care centers in the state of Maryland. The parents became actively involved with their children and returned feedback sheets even in the centers without a strong parent involvement program in existence previously. A copy of one feedback sheet actually received from a parent is attached. The activities in HLE Set I are appropriate for children that are young threes through age four and one half. Set II is developed for young fours through age five and one half. A complete set of activities for ages three through second grade is here. Feedback sheets should be on the back of every activity sent home. A sample is included.

Using in-home materials the step-by-step Home Learning Enablers utilize household objects as systematic instructional materials. This easy, inexpensive mechanism for involving parents, pilot tested in Maryland, would be easy to apply nationwide.

A distinct sequence is listed in each activity. The Name of the activity gives a hint to the parent as to content and is usually colloquial if at all possible. The Why Do It section tells the objective or purpose of the activity and tells a line or two about what the activity teaches. An attempt is made here to be as specific as possible without using educational jargon, long words or long sentences.

The Materials Needed section lists materials and an attempt is made to keep materials simple, inexpensive, and already available in the home. The How To Do It section gives a simple step by step approach to the activity. An effort is made to be brief and clear in this section. A unique feature of these enablers is that Time Needed is always shown clearly and beginning activities, especially, are kept short, 5 to 10 minutes. Parents are tired after a day's work, and three, four, five, six and seven year old have a short attention span. The activities have been timed to be as close in approximation to the time listed as possible.

The Evaluation/Did It Work section provides the parent with some evaluation information by describing observable signs of the success of the enabler activity. The Easier and Harder Ideas section gives adaptations of the activity with fairly minor changes for younger children in #1 and for older or more able children in #2. It also encourages parents' and childrens' creativity in adapting enabler activities and sharing these suggestions with the teacher.

Sending Home HLEs

Classroom teachers will send home the HLE of the week plus its cover letter/feedback sheet with each child, perhaps safety pinning it to his or her clothing. The families will have seven days to do the activity with their child, one or more times, and return the feedback sheet, before receiving another activity home. Parents will tear off the feedback sheet (see example) and return it to their child's teacher. Participation each week and degree of participation is entirely voluntary on the part of the parent.

Return of the Feedback Sheets

Children will return the tear-off feedback sheet to their classroom teacher. Second copies of the feedback sheet can be sent home or filled in at the classroom if first copies get lost. Teachers then review the feedback sheets to see which areas learning might need further emphasis. Users have found that many parents take pride in checking the blank stating that their child does NOT need more help in that particular area. Parents also write in other interesting and useful comments that build the communication link between parent and teacher.

3. FEEDBACK SHEET

For: Kimberly Peters
(Child's Name)

1. Did you or someone else do the activity with the child? Yes___ No___

If Yes,

2. How many times did you do the activity? Once___ More than once 2
3. How much time did the activity take? 0 ---- ✓ 15 mins. ---- more than 30 mins.
4. Did you enjoy this activity with your child? Yes ✓ No___
5. Do you feel your child understood it? Yes ✓ No___
6. Do you feel your child needs more help in this area? Yes ___ No ✓
7. Please share any adaptation you may have of this activity, or describe a new activity you would suggest. (Write on the back, if necessary). Thanks for cooperating!

Julia H. Griffith
Signature

Mrs Hall
Teacher's Name

Kim especially enjoyed the game
Especially when played it to
the tune of the "Mulberry Bush"

PARENT LETTER/FEEDBACK SHEET

Dear Parent:

Did you know you are the child's most important teacher? Would you take 5 minutes this week and do this activity with your child? Please tear off the sheet below with your ideas and comments and send it back to the teacher.

Thank you,

Date:

____
(Teacher)

(tear off)

- -

Date:

FEEDBACK SHEET

For:(Child's name)_______________

1. Did you or someone else do the activity with the child?
Yes______ No______

2. If yes, how many times did you do the activity? Once?___
More than once?_____

3. How much time did the activity take? - - - - - - - - - - -
0 15 mins. 30

4. Did you enjoy this activity with your child?
Yes_____ No______

5. Did you feel your child understood it?
Yes_____ No _____

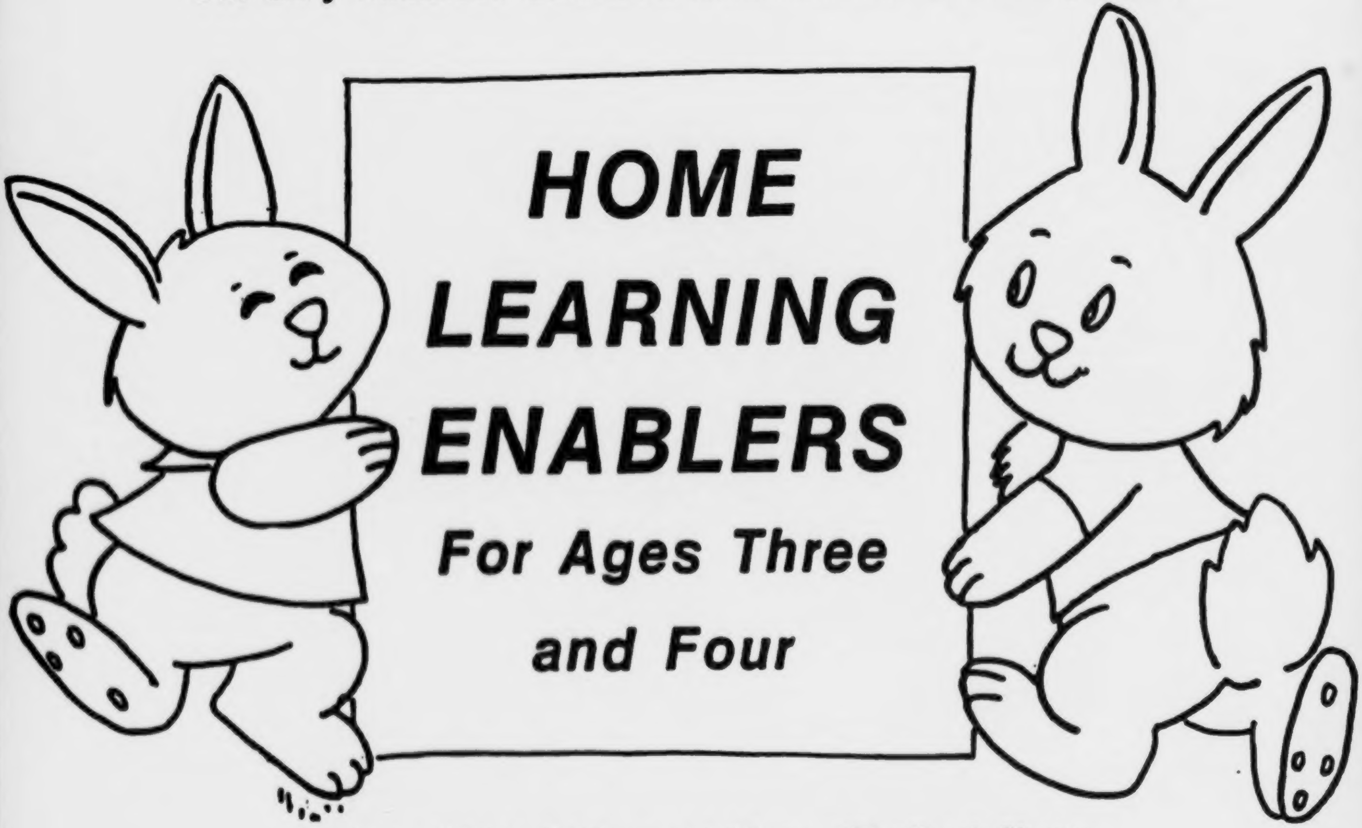
6. Do you feel your child needs more help in this area?
Yes_____ No_____

7. Please share any adaptation you may have of this activity, or describe a new activity you would suggest. Thanks for cooperating!

____
Signature

____
Teacher's Name

The Early Childhood Education Administration Institute presents



HOME LEARNING ENABLERS

For Ages Three and Four

Packets of 14 Activities and 14 Letter/Feedback Sheets

This 14 week supply of activities is ideal for building parent involvement. The Home Learning Enablers will help parents learn new ways of talking and interacting with their children with a minimum of effort needed on the part of the teachers or parents. The activities are specific, sequenced and related to the early curriculum: three factors found to be of top importance in maintaining the gains early childhood programs work so hard to achieve. The activities can be sent home safety-pinned to the children's clothing and feedback sheets can be returned to the center in the same way. Teachers can review returned feedback sheets to see which areas of learning might need further emphasis. Parents often write in other interesting or useful comments that build the communication link between parent and teacher. All activities utilize common household items if any materials are needed. Activities are in a sequence of less difficult to more difficult. There are nine developing language/reading readiness activities and five early math activities in this set.

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Talking Builds Reading Readiness

Why Do It

To build a large listening and speaking vocabulary for your child. This will be a base for reading.

Materials Needed

Story book(s). A visit to the library.

Parent's Time Needed

5-10 minutes

How to Do It

1. Let your child have lots of experiences and talk about them. Doing things and telling the family about them helps your child.
2. Ask questions as you read or talk to your child. "What do you think happened next?" "How do your think the children felt?" "How is that dog like our dog?"
3. Hold your child on your lap while you read or talk to him or her. This helps a child start out feeling good.
4. Visit the library together. Check out books for your child.
5. Talk about your own reading, when you read a recipe, or a label or the mail. Let your child know how useful it is.

Age of Child

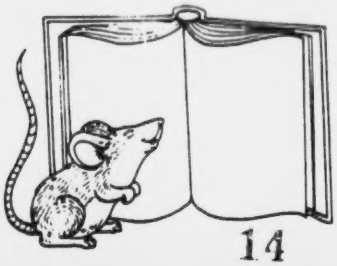
3-7 years

Did it Work?

Does your child enjoy learning and saying new words?

Easier and Harder Ideas

1. A younger child can prepare for matching letters that are alike or different, later, by matching blocks, silverware, pictures, or other things, he or she can pick up and handle now.
2. An older child will enjoy hearing and using new names of things, people and places. Always say all the names of things and people when you tell him or her something. Names need to be heard many times before a child can say them.



Using the Neighborhood for Learning

Why Do It

To build observation skills, understanding of other people and of the work world.

Materials Needed

A trash bag

Parent's Time Needed

5-10 minutes

How To Do It

1. Ask your child "what happens to the trash? Let him or her carry a bag out to the trash can. When the trash truck comes, point it out and talk about the truck taking the trash to the dump. Talk about the trash man's job.
2. Ask what happens to the letter your child or you put in the mailbox. Talk about where it goes and the work the mail people do.
3. Do the same for the school bus driver, and any telephone repair or street repair people.

Age Of Child

3-7 years

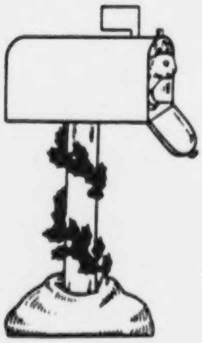
Did It Work

Can your child tell you what he sees and learn new works, like "asphalt"? Can he or she tell another family member?

Easier And Harder Ideas

1. A younger child can practice keeping his or her outdoor toys in a special place.
2. An older child can go further with you and help pay for things at the store or watch the numbers change on the gas pump.

Photo Opportunity



Take a picture of this activity and show it to friends or family

Saving Money on Halloween Fun

Why Do It

To develop creativity and build eye-hand coordination.

Materials Needed

Costume materials from around the house such as; old costume jewelry, make-up, tights, paperbags, sheets, magazines and scissors.

Parent's Time Needed

5-10 minutes (each)

How To Do It

1. Help your child create his or her own costume. Costume jewelry and old clothes are always fun. Sheets and paper bags (with holes in them) can be anything. Make one for yourself too.
2. Cut pumpkins, witches or ghost pictures out of the magazines and decorate the home.
3. Make Halloween special treats with apples and raisins. Take the core out of the apple and fill it with raisins. Make raisin eyes, nose and mouth on a slice.

Age Of Child

3-7

Did It Work

Does your child feel comfortable enough to pass out treats on Halloween night?

Easier And Harder Ideas

1. A younger child can go with an adult to three houses for "Trick or Treat".
2. An older child can look up "Halloween" in the encyclopedia and see how the holiday began.

Waiting Games

Why Do It

To turn waiting times into learning times.

Materials Needed

None

Parent's Time Needed

5-10 minutes anytime you need to wait: in the car, in the store, at the doctor's office.

How To Do It

1. In a store or laundromat play a category game. At the supermarket ask him or her to put the meat together, the round cans in a stack and the boxes in a pile. Add more ideas: light things on top, heavy things on the bottom. At the laundromat, match things or put them in categories for each family member.
2. In the car at a stop light, beat a rhythm pattern on the steering wheel, see if your child can repeat the pattern. Ask him or her to make a pattern for you.

Age of Child

3-6

Did it Work

Can your child tell about what he or she did later? Can he or she match or make categories at home?

Easier and Harder Ideas

1. When waiting with a younger child, look at what "pictures" the clouds make when you are outside. Inside, match words with what you are doing: "up" or "down" for the escalator, "two" or "three" of items in the grocery store.
2. An older child can make or dictate a list of all people who have helping jobs that they see: bus driver, traffic cop, store clerk. At home later see how many he or she can tell another family member about.

My Kitchen Spot

Why Do It

To help build your child's vocabulary and thinking skills. Nesting containers and putting them together help him or her learn categories.

Materials Needed

Pots, pans, lids, bowls, spoons, empty boxes, and plastic containers in a drawer or shelf in the kitchen.

Parent's Time Needed

5-10 minutes

How to Do It

1. Tape your child's picture and name to the "spot" drawer or cupboard you select. Gather a collection of unbreakable kitchen items there.
2. Make it clear that he or she must ask before using other things in the kitchen. Talk about sounds, talk about inside and outside, nesting and stirring.
3. Tell your child the names of all the things in the "spot". Change them from time to time. Tell him or her the names of all the things you use in the kitchen.

Age of Child

3-6

Did it Work

Can your child tell you the shape of some of the items? Can he or she put all the same shapes together?

Easier and Harder Ideas

1. Have a tasting session with sugar, salt, cinnamon, or cocoa. Talk about what the smells and tastes remind you of.
2. Encourage an older child to make homemade toys from kitchen discards, such as egg cartons, paper towel tubes, milk cartons, corks, string and plastic picnic spoons.

Walking In Snow

Why Do It

To build your child's learning through all the senses. To develop vocabulary.

Materials Needed

A snowy day.

Parent's Time Needed

5-10 minutes

How to Do It

1. Take a walk in the snow together. Let your child walk quietly or noisily, crunch the snow or pat it and handle it.
2. Ask him or her what it feels like? What it sounds like? What it tastes like when you stick out your tongue for a falling flake? What it smells like? (maybe nothing).
3. Press a snowball in your hand and put it in the freezer. Look at it later.

Age of Child

3-6

Did it Work

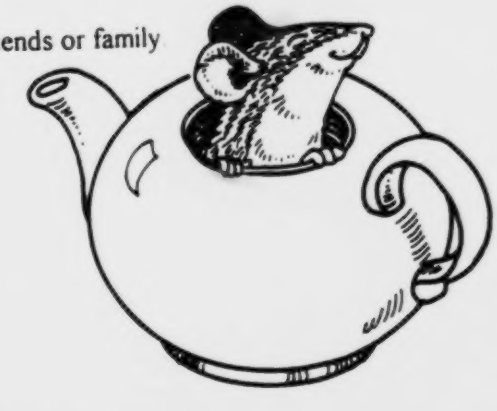
Can your child tell you two or three things snow sounds or feels like?

Easier and Harder Ideas

1. Have a special tea party after the walk with special cups and a pitcher to pour from. Hot milk or hot cocoa, maybe even cinnamon on toast is good.
2. An older child can dictate a letter to Grandma and Grandpa about the snow. He or she can draw a picture to go with the letter.

Photo Opportunity

Take a picture of this activity and show it to friends or family



Home Learning Enabler
Preschool 3-4
Social Studies

Special Family Ways at Holiday Time

Why Do It

To build your child's knowledge and experience with holiday traditions.

Materials Needed

Music, old or new holiday cards, Sunday newspaper comics, paper and red crayons

Parent's Time Needed

5-10 minutes

How to Do It

1. Turn on music on the radio or play a record to help your child learn the words to holiday songs.
2. Ask your child to arrange the holiday cards the family receives or some from past years. Encourage him or her to put the cards where everyone can see them.
3. Ask your child to help wrap the gifts he or she makes or selects. Sunday newspaper comics makes wonderful wrapping paper.
4. Make a star Santa Claus. One point is the face, 2 points are feet with black boots and 2 points are hands with white mittens. Use it for a gift or tree decoration.

Age of Child

3-6

Did it Work

Does your child enjoy starting new holiday traditions?

Easier and Harder Ideas

1. With a shoelace or needle and thread string cereal for the birds. Hang the strings or loops on a tree or bushes outside and watch what happens.
2. An older child can enjoy reading (or being read to) about holiday customs and traditions around the world. The non-fiction part of the children's library would have these books. Talk about holidays when you were a child.
3. Take cookies or a holiday treat to someone who is lonely. Have your child present the gift. Ask the family to help decide who might be lonely.

Photo Opportunity

Take a picture of this activity and show it to friends or family

"Actually, The Problem Is"...

Why Do It

To build problem solving skills and practice decision making.

Materials Needed

A broken toy or something your child sees as a problem.

Parent's Time Needed

5-10 minutes

How to Do It

1. Decide together what the problem is. Ask "what do you think the problem is?" (the wheel is broken, he took my truck, and so on).
2. Think together of a lot of ideas to solve the problem. Tape the wheel on? Set a timer for his turn with the truck? Try a new wheel?
3. Evaluate the ideas together. Which one(s) are likely to work. Try them.
4. Ask him or her to evaluate how the solution worked. The wheel won't turn when it's taped? What else could we do? Start over at #1 again.

Age of Child

3-9

Did it Work

Does your child enjoy thinking up new ideas and trying them?

Easier and Harder Ideas

1. A younger child might try to solve a disagreement by beating up a friend. Talk about what else he or she could do. Take turns? Set a timer? Ask for the toy.
2. An older child can be encouraged to ask questions to get things clear in his or her own mind. Share with them how you come to a decision or a solution about something. It is good for children to know adults have to think things through also.

Home Learning Enabler
Preschool 3-4
Math
Problem Solving

Saving Money on Toys and Games

Why Do It

To build eye-hand coordination, counting skills and problem solving skills.

Materials Needed

An old deck of cards (less than 52 is O.K.), checkers or another board game, pad of cheap paper to replace a coloring book, crayons.

Parent's Time Needed

5-10 minutes (each)

How To Do It

1. With the cards, play a matching game. Match pairs and work up to matching four of a number.
2. Play an adding game with the cards. All face cards count as ten. See who can get to twenty first.
3. Play checkers or the board game. Practice counting up to 5 either for moves with dice or count checkers.
4. Have your child draw a picture to color in on the pad to make his or her own coloring book.

Age Of Child

3-7 years

Did It Work

Does your child get better at taking turns? Does he or she say "let's count that again" when the count is wrong?

Easier And Harder Ideas

1. Use the deck of cards for playing "pretend family". Make up a story about the family.
2. Check books, toys and records out of a library near you. If a book is too advanced for your child, talk about the pictures.

Learning in the Living Room

Why Do It

To build new experiences, new things to talk about and new understandings.

Materials Needed

The living room in your home

Parent's Time Needed

5-10 minutes

How To Do It

1. Talk about what you are doing in the living room such as straightening up, folding a sweater, emptying a trash basket. Let him or her help you. Ask your child to talk about what he or she of doing too.
2. Help your child learn about the sounds of music. It can be fast, slow, loud, or soft. Ask him or her to tell you how it makes him or her feel. Let your child turn the radio on and off.
3. Let your child find out how things work: turn on lamps, the vacuum or ring the doorbell.

Age of Child

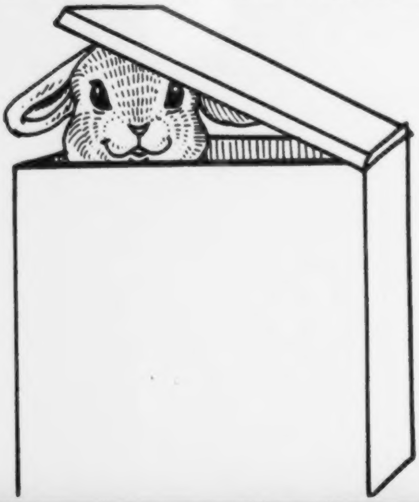
3-9 years

Did it Work?

Does your child enjoy learning how to make things happen?

Easier and Harder Ideas

1. A younger child might enjoy marching or dancing to the music he or she hears. Listen to the songs and sing with him or her.
2. An older child might enjoy making a tent out of blankets or playing house on a rainy day or on a sick day. Quietly explain about the right and wrong time for this more active play.



Home Learning Enabler
Preschool 3-4
Science, Math

Bath Time is a Science Class

Why Do It

To help your child build vocabulary, learn math concepts, and have science experiences

Materials Needed

Bath tub, soap, metal or plastic measuring cups, a bath toy.

Parent's Time Needed

5-10 minutes

How To Do It

1. When your child is in the bathtub talk about the water: wet, hot, cold, warm, heavy, powerful, shiny with soap.
2. Use a smaller measuring cup to fill a larger measuring cup. How many does it take? Talk about the large cup being half full, too full or not full enough.
3. See if the soap floats or sinks. Then see if the bathtub toy (or any plastic container) floats or sinks.
4. Talk about raindrops, waves and whirlpools.

Age Of Child

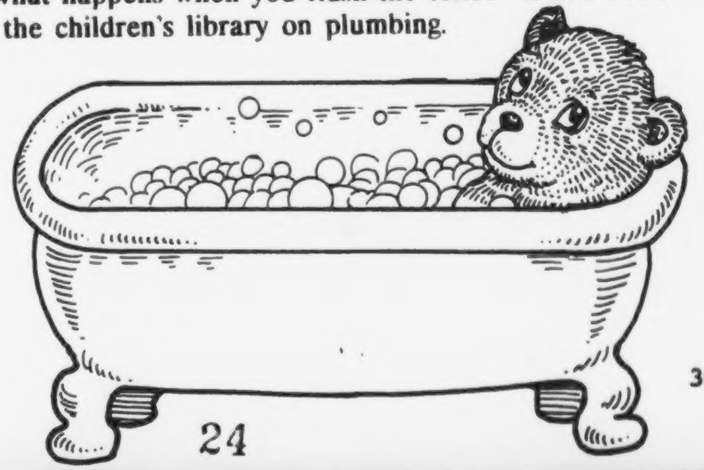
3-6 years

Did It Work

Does your child enjoy learning new things at bath time?

Easier And Harder Ideas

1. A younger child enjoys practice in brushing his or her teeth. The child may suck on the toothbrush or eat the toothpaste. You can guide your child's hand to show him or her the brushing motion.
2. An older child enjoys learning how things work. Take the lid off the toilet tank and let him or her see what happens when you flush the toilet. Get a book from the non-fiction part of the children's library on plumbing.



Touch the Real World

Why Do It

To help your child feel at home in the world of nature and use materials from it.

Materials Needed

Paper bag for gathering natural things: leaves, pebbles, sticks, grasses. Glue and paper.

Parent's Time Needed

10-15 minutes

How To Do It

1. Take a walk with your child near some grass and trees or in a park.
2. Gather leaves, sticks, grass, or anything that might be good glued to a collage.
3. Find a forked stick and take it home to toast marshmallows or a hot dog. The fireplace or over a gas stove with an adult present are good, or a barbecue outdoors.
4. At home glue the natural materials to the paper for a "nature collage". These make for good discussion as a centerpiece on the family table.

Age Of Child

3-9 years

Did It Work

Does your child enjoy gathering the materials? Does he or she want to learn the names?

Easier And Harder Ideas

1. A younger child may need pieces of yarn or scraps of gift wrap to add to the collage.
2. An older child would enjoy catching fireflies on a warm summer night in a ja with a lid. Make holes in the lid first with a can opener. Then watch the fireflies light up in the dark outside or in a closet. Let the fireflies go before bedtime.

Home Learning Enabler
Preschool 3-4
Science

Oh! You Found Another Worm!
-- Learning in the Backyard

Why Do It

To help your child find lots of reasons to love the world he or she lives in.

Materials Needed

A yard or nearby park.

Parent's Time Needed

5-10 minutes

How To Do It

1. Look at the trees, flowers, plants, insects and worms in your yard or a nearby park. Respond to your child's interest and provide safe plastic containers.
2. In the yard provide an old blanket to make a tent. Some toys to play with inside the tent make it interesting.
3. Have a picnic outside with one friend or with the family. Share the work. Let your child bring out the paper plates and utensils.
4. Ask your child to help plan the food for your picnic.

Age Of Child

3-6 years

Did It Work

Does your child become more observant? Ask to do it again?

Easier And Harder Ideas

1. Take a nature hike around the yard with a younger child. Look for the first crocus or forsythia buds. (In fall, look at the colors of fallen leaves).
2. An older child can plant his or her own garden. Lettuce and radishes grow quickly. Marigolds, asters and zinnias grow well from seeds. Your child can enjoy watering, weeding and picking his or her own flowers.

Photo Opportunity

Take a picture of this activity and show it to friends or family

Home Learning Enabler
Preschool 3-4
Science

Things From Your Table May Grow: Learning in Spring

REASON

To help your child notice differences in growing things in spring.

MATERIALS

Paper cups, dirt or potting soil, cantalope, watermelon, pumpkin, orange or apple seeds, carrot tops. Two or three "Band-Aids".

TIME NEEDED

5-10 minutes

HOW TO

1. Encourage your child to try planting seeds left from food and see which will grow.

2. Plant seeds in dirt in a paper cup. Small seeds can go in dirt in the half of an egg shell in a cup.

3. Cut off the tops of two carrots with one inch of orange carrot showing, and plant one in water and one in dirt. Compare progress.

4. Put a band-aid on the underneath side of a houseplant and see what happens. Put another band-aid (or smear vaseline) on top of a plant leaf. Compare.

EVALUATION

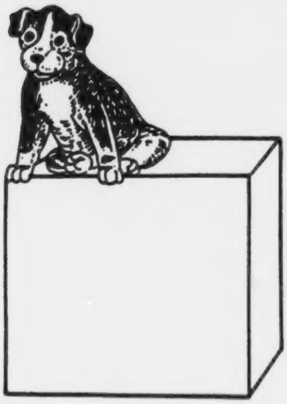
Does your child tell you about the changes he or she notices?

EASIER AND HARDER IDEAS

1. A younger child will enjoy feeling the softness of a flower petal. Teach conservation by not picking most flowers.

2. An older child might enjoy a family contest for who can spot the first robin or who discovers the first spring flowers.

Shape Hunt



Reason

To build awareness of shapes. To develop classification skills.

Materials Needed

None.

Time Needed

5 - 10 minutes.

How To Do It

1. Talk about shapes with your child such as circle, square, rectangle, and triangle.
2. Have a "shape hunt" inside and see how many shapes your child can find. Try one shape only such as circle or square to start.
3. Have a "shape hunt" outside. Learn words for new shapes such as oval or hexagon for a stop sign.
4. Find shapes in letters on signs outside. Look for these while riding in the car.
5. Look for shapes in story book pictures.

Evaluation

Can your child identify some shapes correctly?

Easier and Harder Ideas

1. A younger child can stay with the first four shapes. Look for them in food at the table.
2. An older child can learn harder shapes, such as trapezoid, pentagon, parallelogram.

Computer Idea

If you can draw on your computer, draw some of the shapes and print them out.

Paper Letter Sounds

Reason

To build listening skills. To learn that letters have sounds that may be different from their names.

Materials Needed

5 - 10 pieces of paper and a pencil.

Time Needed

5 - 10 minutes.

How To Do It

1. Write one of the following letters on a piece of paper: B, D, P, T. Make the letter 3 or 4 inches tall.
2. Make the sound of the letter that begins with that letter. For example, "B", "Buh", "Boy".
3. Do all four letters. Give the letter papers to your child.
4. Now ask your child to hold up a letter for you to say the name, sound, and a word. Reverse roles and you say the letters for your child.
5. Go on to more letters such as H, L, M, N, and G. Do the "hard sounding" consonants first. Use capital letters. Save the small letters until later.

Evaluation

Does your child hold up the correct letter at least some of the time?

Easier and Harder Ideas

1. A younger child can play an "I'm thinking of a letter" game. Your child tells you the letter and you tell your child the sound it makes, and an object that starts with that letter (this can be done in the car or at bedtime without paper).
2. An older child can listen for ending sounds in words that end with these letters such as DOG or PAL. Then add one vowel (A, E or I are good) and make some three letter words.

Computer Idea

Print out the letters in a large font, one to a page.

SAMPLE PARENT LETTER/FEEDBACK SHEET

____
(Date)

Dear Parent:

Did you know you are your child's most important teacher? Would you take 5 minutes this week and do this activity with your chld? Please tear off the sheet below with your ideas and comments and sent it back to school.

Thank you

____
(Teacher's name)

(Tear Off)

FEEDBACK SHEET

For: _______________
(Child's name)

1. Did you or someone else do the activity with the child? YES_____ NO_____

- -

If YES,

2. How many times did you do the activity? Once_____ More than Once _____

3. How much time did the activity take? 0 — 15 mins. — more than 30 mins.

4. Did you enjoy this activity with your child? YES_____ NO_____

5. Do you feel your child understood it? YES_____ NO_____

6. Do you feel your child needs more help in this area? YES_____ NO_____

7. Please share any adaptation you may have of this activity, or describe a new activity you would suggest. (Write on the back, if necessary) Thanks for cooperating!

_______________ Signature

_______________ Teacher's name

The Early Childhood Education Administration Institute presents

HOME LEARNING ENABLERS

Set II for 4-5½ years

Packets of 14 Activities and 14 Letter/Feedback Sheets

This 14 week supply of activities is ideal for building parent involvement. The Home Learning Enablers will help parents le new ways of talking and interacting with their children with a minimum of effort needed on the part of the teachers or pare The activities are specific, sequenced and related to the early curriculum: three factors found to be of top importance in m taining the gains early childhood programs work so hard to achieve. The activities can be sent home safety-pinned to children's clothing and feedback sheets can be returned to the center in the same way. Teachers can review returned feedb sheets to see which areas of learning might need further emphasis. Parents often write in other interesting or useful comm that build the communication link between parent and teacher. All activities utilize common household items if any mate are needed. Activities are in a sequence of less difficult to more difficult.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

#1 Hear the Bell

Reason

To build listening skills. To practice number skills.

Materials Needed

A bell, a box, 5-10 pieces of paper and a pencil.

Time Needed

5 - 10 minutes.

How To Do It

1. Ask your child to go into another room and tell you how many times you ring the bell (ring it under five times).
2. Write down the number he or she says. Do this several times until you have the numbers 1 through 5 on pieces of paper.
3. Now ring the bell under a box (where your child can't see it). Ask your child to hold up the number paper or numeral that is correct.
4. Ask your child to ring the bell in the box for you to hold up the numerals. Write the numbers up to 10.
5. Do sets of rings, such as 2 + 2 to get the number 4. Do other simple adding and then subtracting problems.

Evaluation

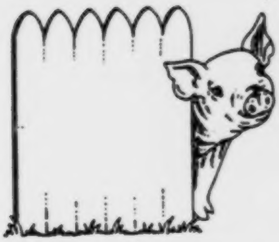
Does your child hold up the right numeral at least some of the time?

Easier and Harder Ideas

1. A younger child can play "find the bell" after you ring it in another place. Even a crawling baby likes this game.
2. An older child can do more addition and subtraction problems. Hold up the 2 card and the 4 card after the rings and ask what these equal (6).

Computer Idea

If your computer has a sound card, listen to some of the sounds it can make.



#2 What Did I Touch?

Reason

To build memory and recall. To develop vocabulary.

Materials Needed

A "magic wand" (perhaps a wooden spoon, stick, pencil, or other pointer), 10-20 objects.

Time Needed

5 - 10 minutes.

How To Do It

1. Tell your child that this game is to see if you both can remember the order in which things have been touched.
2. Touch an object in the room (or outside), say its name, and then pass the wand to your child to touch an object and say both names.
3. Take turns touching all the objects just touched and saying their names. Keep going until the sequence becomes too long.
4. Try it with harder objects, such as different spices in the kitchen or different buttons.

Evaluation

Can your child remember a sequence of at least four or five objects?

Easier and Harder Ideas

1. A younger child can start with two or three objects.
2. An older child can do sets of two, three, four and five objects and multiply for the total number touched.

Computer Idea

Show your child how to touch five to ten keys on the computer, perhaps letters for his or her name and "enter".

# 3 Sidewalk Numbers Ladder

Reason

To develop number skills. To build large muscle coordination.

Materials Needed

Chalk and a sidewalk.

Time Needed

5 - 10 minutes.

How To Do It

1. With your child draw a "ladder" on the sidewalk with numbers from 1 to 5 or 1 to 10, whatever your child knows and understands.
2. Ask your child to stand on the middle square, the 3.
3. Call out a new number for him or her to stand on. If he or she misses the correct number, he or she becomes the caller and you stand on the numbers.
4. Call out numbers to add to the number your child is standing on. For example, "Add two" means your child ends up on 5.
5. Call out numbers to subtract from the number your child is standing on. Work up to higher sidewalk numbers.

Evaluation

Does your child land on the correct number one or two times?

Easier and Harder Ideas

1. A younger child can hop or jump to the right number.
2. An older child can take the "number ladder" up to 20 or 25 and do more addition and subtraction problems.

Computer Idea

Make a number ladder on the computer. Print it out and play indoors. Or draw one.

#4 Sidewalk Addition and Subtraction

Reason

To develop beginning math skills. To encourage analyzing a problem.

Materials Needed

Chalk, dice (one or two), a sidewalk.

Time Needed

5 - 10 minutes.

How To Do It

1. Talk about dice with your child if they are a new object. Show the dots on all the sides.
2. Draw a "number ladder" on the sidewalk and fill it in with the numbers 1 to 10.
3. Ask your child to stand on the number 1. Roll the dice and call out the number to add to the one he or she is standing on. When your child is on a high number then call out to subtract the number on the dice.
4. Take turns. If the player goes off the end of the number line, then the child reads the dice to you until you go off one end.
5. Tape one dice cube to read plus or minus. Roll it and the untaped die to determine whether to add or subtract.

Evaluation

Can your child land on the right number some of the time?

Easier and Harder Ideas

1. A younger child can color the "ladder steps" with colored chalk.
2. An older child can draw a longer number line and do multiplication on it.

Computer Idea

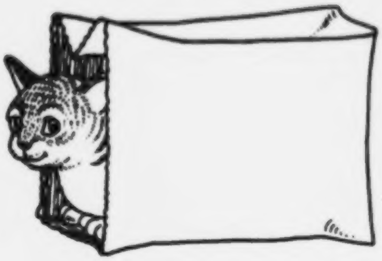
Print out another, longer number ladder and use it with the dice.

#5 Can You Remember

Reason

To develop memory and recall. To build sequencing skills and large motor skills.

Materials Needed



An animal puppet.

Time Needed

5 - 10 minutes.

How To Do It

1. Show your child the puppet and name it together if it doesn't already have a name.
2. Show the puppet doing four different movements. Some examples might be roll over, walk a straight line, clap hands (paws), and try to stand on its head.
3. Ask your child to act out the four different movements with his or her body. Your child can be the puppet now.
4. Try five movements when four can be done successfully.
5. Try "useful" movements like four steps in making a bed or washing dishes.

Evaluation

Can your child copy the sequence of movements?

Easier and Harder Ideas

1. A younger child can start with copying two or three movements.
2. An older child can work up to copying ten or more movements as in a dance step or exercise sequence.

Computer Idea

Show your child four steps to turn on the computer. Show your child four steps to turn off the computer.

Home Learning Enabler
Observing, Estimating

Kindergarten
Math

#6 Roll the Dice

Reason

To develop beginning math skills. To practice one to one correspondence.

Materials Needed

A pair of dice, paper and pencil, a pile of 10-20 small objects (buttons, spoons, pebbles are fine).

Time Needed

5 - 10 minutes.

How To Do It

1. Show your child the dice and with one die, ask him or her to roll it and record the number. Do this until all the numbers on one die are recorded. How many rolls did it take?
2. Guess how many rolls it would take to do it again. Try it and see.
3. Roll one die to see the number of objects to take away from the pile of objects.
4. Roll the other die (with the other hand) to see how many objects to put back on the pile.
5. Work up to using both dice and recording numbers up to 12. Roll two dice to see how many objects to add to the pile or take away. Get more small items if necessary.

Evaluation

Does your child record the numbers correctly some of the time?

Easier and Harder Ideas

1. A younger child can work with larger objects, such as stuffed animals. Use lower numbers.
2. An older child can do this with another child and play "my turn, your turn".

Computer Idea

Show your child the game of solitaire on the computer or with real cards. Talk about the number sequences.

#7 Album Dictation

Reason

To build memory, summarizing and organizing skills.

Materials Needed

A photo album, labels or materials to make labels, pen or pencil.

Time Needed

5 - 10 minutes.

How To Do It

1. Ask your child to dictate captions to go with pictures in the photo album. Let him or her do this even if the pictures are already labeled.
2. Talk about what position people are in, in the picture, especially in relation to each other. For example, "Dad standing, Mom sitting".
3. Talk about your child's special people. Can he or she name everyone in the picture and tell how they are related to himself or herself?
4. Talk about places where your child and family members had fun together. Mark all the pictures in one place with blue, from another place with red. Organize the pictures by location with the colors.
5. Plan together what picture would be good to take next.

Evaluation

Does your child come up with some interesting captions?

Easier and Harder Ideas

1. A younger child can draw a picture of him or herself between two special people.
2. An older child can draw one or more pictures of family members in a place where they had fun together.

Computer Idea

Type the captions into the computer and print them out to use as labels in the album.

#8 Decorate a Bedroom for You and Your Toy

Reason

To build estimating, hypothesizing, and imagining skills.

Materials Needed

Paper and pencil, JC Penney or other furniture catalog, a tape measure.

Time Needed

10 minutes.

How To Do It

1. Talk to your child about decorating a bedroom for his or her favorite toy and for your child.
2. Ask: what would your child's perfect bedroom look like if he or she could decorate it any way your child wanted?
3. What colors? What designs? (dinosaur bedspreads or teddy bear curtains?) What furniture? What furniture would the toy need? (a toy bed, shelves, a chair?)
4. Ask your child to draw a picture of the room. Would all the things fit? Measure some similar things together to make sure.
5. Look in a furniture or other catalog and cut out pictures of similar items.

Evaluation

Does your child think of one or two things to include?

Easier and Harder Ideas

1. A younger child can first draw a picture of their room as it is.
2. An older child can add up costs of the catalog items to see how much the total would cost. Do this again on a computer or calculator, if you have one to check the addition.

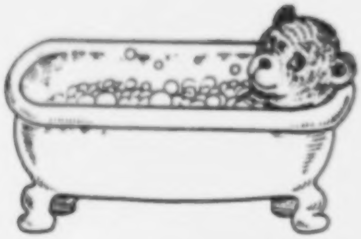
Photo Opportunity

Take a picture of this activity and show it to friends or family.

#9 Bath Tub Games

Reason

To practice recognizing letters.



Materials Needed

Bathtub, shaving cream.

Time Needed

5 - 10 minutes.

How To Do It

1. At bath time, use the shaving cream to write these letters on the side of the tub: C A B. Ask your child to name these letters. Say the word.
2. Then write the letter H above the A and the letter T below the A, to make the word HAT from top to bottom. Say the word. Talk about the letter A being in both words. Say the sound. Talk about what "hat" and "cab" mean.
3. Write the letters B E G on the tub. Ask your child to name the letters. Say the word. Then write the letter F above the E and the letter D below the E, to make the word FED from top to bottom. Talk about what "fed" and "beg" mean.
4. Talk about the letter E being in both words. Talk about the sounds of the letters.
5. Wash the letters off the tub.

Evaluation

Did your child recognize some of the letters?

Easier and Harder Ideas

1. A younger child , or a child who doesn't know letter sounds, can start with single letters such as B, D, P and T. Make their sounds and name an object that begins with that sound.
2. An older child can write more letters and words on the tub or on a piece of cardboard or paper.

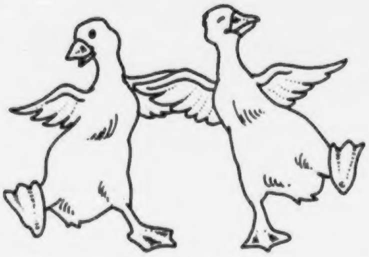
Computer Idea

Do this on a computer in a large font and print it out.

#10 Toy Sounds

Reason

To develop listening skills.



Materials Needed

Toys.

Time Needed

5 - 10 minutes.

How To Do It

1. Tell your child that you will make a sound like one of his or her toys. Can he or she guess what it is? Can your child say the name of the toy?
2. Take turns. Your child makes a sound next, and you guess. (This can be played in the car, or waiting in line).
3. Ask your child to draw a picture of the toys he or she likes best.
4. Compare the toys in the picture to the sizes of the actual toys.
5. Ask your child to draw pictures of other categories of toys: those liked least, the big ones, the small ones, the red ones, the indoor or outdoor ones. (This can be done over several days).

Evaluation

Does your child identify the sound of some of his or her toys?

Easier and Harder Ideas

1. A younger child can identify the sounds different people make (eg. "Waaah" for a baby).
2. An older child can identify the sounds musical instruments make (eg. drum, harp, piano).

Photo Opportunity

Take a picture of this activity and show it to friends or family

Pinwheels

Reason

To build eye-hand coordination. To develop an awareness of shapes and how they can change.

Materials Needed

Bread, peanut butter and jelly.

Time Needed

5 minutes.

How To Do It

1. Ask your child to spread peanut butter on a square piece of bread. Starting at one end, roll the bread into a log. Slice it into "pinwheels" and give your child these new "circles".
2. Try it again with peanut butter and jelly. Another day cream cheese or other spreads can be used.
3. Count two sets of two pinwheels. Eat one set and see how many are left.
4. Count other pinwheels and add them: 3 and 1, 2 and 3, 3 and 0. Subtract as they get eaten.

Evaluation

Does your child see the square bread become a circle?

Easier and Harder Ideas

1. A younger child can spread peanut butter on celery. Sprinkle with raisins, or make a face.
2. An older child can make a baked apple. Core the apple without cutting through the bottom. Fill the hole with butter, brown sugar and raisins. Bake or microwave until soft.

Computer Idea

Type your child's "cook book" from these recipes and others into the computer and print it out.

Letter Bingo

Reason

To build listening skills. To practice comparing letters and letter sounds.

Materials Needed

Cardboard or paper for a Bingo card; pencil; buttons or pennies.

Time Needed

5 - 6 minutes.

How To Do It

1. Write B - I - N - G - O across the top of the cardboard and draw columns down from each of the five letters. Draw five horizontal lines to make a chart or grid.
2. Put four letters randomly in the boxes in the grid. Start with hard consonants such as D, B, R, K (or D, B, T, P from the last HLE "paper letter sounds" if more practice is needed).
3. Say the sound of a letter and a word that begins with that letter, such as "Duh" "Dog". Ask your child to place a button, penny or pebble on the letter that makes that sound and tell you it's name, "D".
4. Do all the letters on the card. Add new letters as your child increases in skill.
5. Have your child call out the letter sounds for you to place a button on, by saying "puh, pat" for the P.

Evaluation

Does your child place a button on the correct letter at least some of the time?

Easier and Harder Ideas

1. A younger child can play letter BINGO starting with just two letters on the card.
2. An older child can work up to five letter words that are spelled across, or down, or diagonally on the card.

Computer Idea

Use a large font on your computer to print out "letter BINGO cards".

SAMPLE PARENT LETTER/FEEDBACK SHEET

____
(Date)

Dear Parent:

Did you know you are your child's most important teacher? Would you take __5__ minutes this week and do this ______________ activity with your chld? Please tear off the sheet below with your ideas and comments and sent it back to school.

Thank you

____
(Teacher's name)

(Tear Off)

FEEDBACK SHEET

For: ________________
(Child's name)

1. Did you or someone else do the activity with the child? YES_____ NO_____

- -

If YES,

2. How many times did you do the activity? Once_____ More than Once _____

3. How much time did the activity take? 0 ——— 15 mins. ——— more than 30 mins.

4. Did you enjoy this activity with your child? YES_____ NO_____

5. Do you feel your child understood it? YES_____ NO_____

6. Do you feel your child needs more help in this area? YES_____ NO_____

7. Please share any adaptation you may have of this activity, or describe a new activity you would suggest. (Write on the back, if necessary) Thanks for cooperating!

________________ Signature

________________ Teacher's name

Home Learning Enabler
Kindergarten
Science

#1 Paper Bag Walk

REASON

To develop observation skills. To feel and look at objects from outdoors.

MATERIALS

Small paper bag, cardboard, white glue.

TIME NEEDED

5-10 minutes.

HOW TO

1. Take a walk outside with your child.
2. Invite your child to collect things from nature and put them in the bag.
3. Acorns, seeds, grass, leaves can all go in the bag.
4. With the white glue, make a collage of the items on a piece of cardboard. If possible, use this as a center piece on the table for one meal.
5. Ask your child to tell about his or her collage.

EVALUATION

Does your child enjoy collecting things? Does he or she want to go again?

EASIER AND HARDER IDEAS

1. A younger child can collect rocks and small sticks and keep them in a shoe box.
2. An older child can make an elaborate collage and add cotton balls, yarn, and crayon decorations.

Photo Opportunity

Take a picture of this activity and show it to friends or family

Home Learning Enabler
Kindergarten
Social Studies

#4 Tell Five Things About the Grocery Store

REASON

To build vocabulary and observation skills. To encourage thinking about cause and effect.

MATERIALS

A trip to the grocery store.

TIME NEEDED

20-60 minutes.

HOW TO

1. Talk about the grocery store. Ask your child where he or she thinks the food comes from.
2. Before you go to the store, ask your child what he or she would like to see (this can be part of a routine shopping trip).
3. Play a game. Tell your child you are going to write down all the things they can remember seeing, when you get home, so to look carefully. At home, list what he or she remembers.
4. On another trip, tell your child you will write down five or more things about the grocery store and what people there do.
5. Do number three (make a list) again. Does your child notice more things?

EVALUATION

Does your child notice more things with each trip to the store?

EASIER AND HARDER IDEAS

1. A younger child can have a "shopping list" made of a piece of cardboard with four or five product pictures or labels pasted on it. Ask him or her to point to the groceries when they see them.
2. An older child can be asked to go down a separate store aisle for one, two or three items to bring back to you.

Home Learning Enabler
Kindergarten
Social Studies

#2 Ride the Bus

REASON

Take your child on public transportation just for the experience. This builds vocabulary about all the new things you see and do.

MATERIALS

A short ride on a bus, subway or even a taxi.

TIME NEEDED

20-30 minutes.

HOW TO

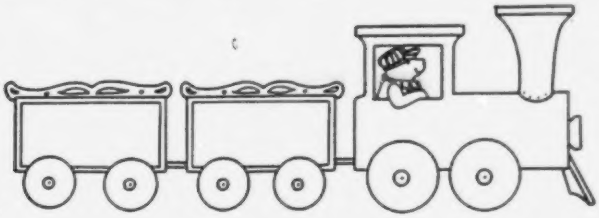
1. Tell your child you two are going on a bus ride. If you do this everyday for commuting with the child, skip to number 2.
2. Talk about the driver, what you pay, and where the people might be going.
3. Let your child hold the money or the subway ticket for a few minutes.
4. Talk about the subway station or bus stop.

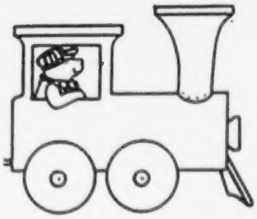
EVALUATION

Does your child notice three or four new things on the ride?

EASIER AND HARDER IDEAS

1. Make trains out of an egg carton bottom, cut length wise. Attach a string to make a pull toy. Let your child color the "train" with markers.
2. An older child can look at the bus routes or subway map. Ask him or her to plan an imaginary trip.





Home Learning Enabler
Kindergarten
Pre-Math

#3 Count the Wheels

REASON

To practice counting. To sharpen observation skills.

MATERIALS

None.

TIME NEEDED

5-10 minutes.

HOW TO

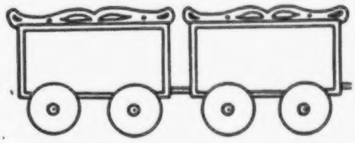
1. The next time you and your child are walking or riding near cars, trains or planes, ask your child to count the wheels he or she sees.
2. See how many sets of two wheels or four wheels he or she can count.
3. If there are a lot of cars, see how high you can go. If ten is the highest number he or she understands, do several sets of ten.
4. If possible, mark down the number of sets of wheels you two count. Then tell your child what the total number is. This is practice in quantity and higher number even if he or she doesn't understand them yet.

EVALUATION

Does your child count two or three sets of two wheels? At least 5 or 6 wheels?

EASIER AND HARDER IDEAS

1. Talk about why airplanes have a few wheels, cars have more, and big trucks have even more.
2. Collect spools and allow "print painting". Put water color paint in a shallow dish and show your child how to make a "print" with spools on a paper. Count the circles (or "wheels") on the paper and write the number on the picture.



Home Learning Enabler
Kindergarten
Science

#5 Flashlight Fun

REASON

To build vocabulary and problem solving skills. To develop life skills.

MATERIALS

A flashlight.

TIME NEEDED

5 minutes.

HOW TO

1. Give your child a flashlight to handle. Together count all the uses the two of you can think up for it.
2. Look for things in a dark closet or drawer with it.
3. Ask your child to find something in a dark room without turning on the light, with it.
4. Talk about light and shadows. Let you child practice making shadows with it. What makes the shadow larger? Smaller?

EVALUATION

Does your child enjoy using the flashlight? These make good gifts -- for your child or for a birthday party.

EASIER AND HARDER IDEAS

1. Let your child take the flashlight to bed. This is especially useful if the child has fears.
2. An older child can take apart the flashlight to put in new batteries or a new bulb.

Home Learning Enabler
Kindergarten
Pre-Reading

#6 Everything Starts with a Sound

REASON

To develop language skills and a knowledge of sounds.

MATERIALS

None.

TIME NEEDED

5 minutes.

HOW TO

1. Show your child the letter "B".

2. Make the sound for the letter B, "Bah".

3. Ask your child to tell you or show you things in your home that being with the "Bah" sound for B (bathtub, baby, or book with "Buh".

4. Do the same for the letter "D" "Duh" doll
"T" "Tuh" table
"P" "Puh" pan

5. Do this with other hard consonants such as K "kitchen". These are easier to identify with their sounds than other letters.

EVALUATION

Does your child realize that letters have sounds? Can he or she get one or two of these four right?

EASIER AND HARDER IDEAS

1. Do this with objects that are outside. "Barn," "Pipe," "Pole," or "Bush" might be some B and P words

2. Look at other letter shapes that start words. Learn the "alphabet song" to learn letter names.

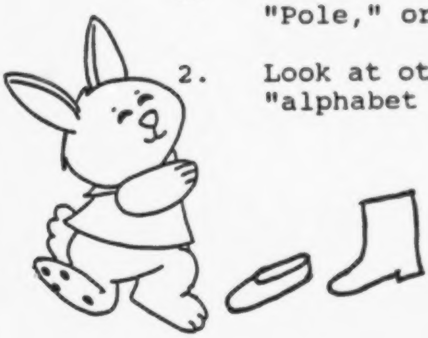


Photo Opportunity

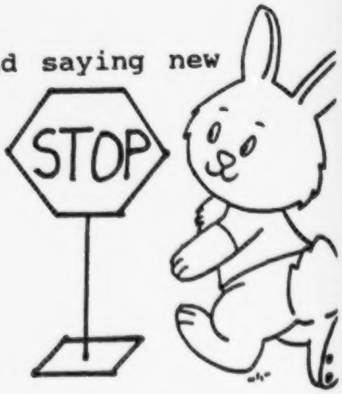
Take a picture of this activity and show it to friends or family

Home Learning Enabler
Kindergarten
Pre-Reading

#7 Words for Sounds

REASON

To practice listening for sounds, saying words, and saying new words.



MATERIALS

None.

TIME NEEDED

5 minutes.

HOW TO

1. Play a listening game and listen for sounds. Ask your child to describe the sounds he or she hears. Someone walking, the radio, a machine going, etc. Ask your child what it sounds like.
2. Go outside and listen for sounds there. Describe them: rain, cars passing by, a lawn mower, a bird, someone singing.
3. Imitate some of the sounds.
4. Listen for sounds and ask your child to describe them in the car together, in the store, or waiting in line.
5. You describe sounds back to your child with new words like: slip, slosh, crunch crunch, or chirp chirp.

EVALUATION

Does your child listen for and describe at least some of the sounds they hear?

EASIER AND HARDER IDEAS

1. A younger child enjoys singing songs with sounds in it (like "Huff-Puff" "Choo Choo" "Off we go" for a train song). Make up the tune if you don't know a song with sounds. Put your child's name in the song.
2. An older child might enjoy listening for bird songs and identifying the birds with a book on birds.

Photo Opportunity

Take a picture of this activity and show it to friends or family.

Home Learning Enabler
Kindergarten
Pre-Writing

#8 What I Like

REASON

To build a positive self image. To cheer up and encourage other family members.

MATERIALS

Blank piece(s) of paper and a marker, pen or pencil.

TIME NEEDED

5 minutes.

HOW TO

1. Ask your child what he or she likes about every family member. Write these statements on the paper.
2. Ask your child what he or she likes about himself or herself. Write those down.
3. Post the lists near the family meal table. Ask each family member to say 3 or 4 things they like about themselves.
4. Compare the lists.
5. At another meal or the same meal, ask family members to say what they like about one another. Write these down too.
6. Put up all the lists together.

EVALUATION

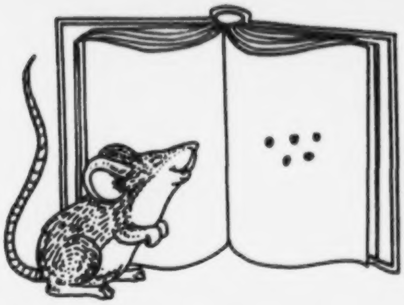
Can your child say two or three things he or she likes about himself or herself?

EASIER AND HARDER IDEAS

1. A younger child will enjoy making puppets by stuffing light-colored socks. Put eyes, nose, hair and mouth on with a marker. Name each puppet for a family member.
2. Have a person of the week when other family members do nice things for one person. Choose the person alphabetically by the first letter of their first name. Write down nice things about that person all week.

Photo Opportunity

Take a picture of this activity and show it to friends or family



Home Learning Enabler
Kindergarten
Numbers Life Skills

#9 Use the Phone

REASON

To develop and practice language skills. To build practical life skills.

MATERIALS

A real or toy telephone.

TIME NEEDED

5-10 minutes.

HOW TO

1. Talk to your child about your telephone and the telephone number (use the telephone you use, even if it's not in the home).
2. Sing the telephone number to a familiar song such as the "Alphabet Song". Teach your child to sing the song.
3. Now with the real telephone or a toy telephone practice the number with the dial or the touch tone buttons.
4. Talk about the order of a telephone conversation. First "Hello" then your conversation, then "Goodbye".
5. Call grandmother or another relative and have a conversation. When you are out with your child, let him or her call from a pay phone.

EVALUATION

Can your child sing his or her "telephone number" song with the right numbers?

EASIER AND HARDER IDEAS

1. A younger child will enjoy drawing a toy telephone on cardboard. Cut it out for them and pretend it's a cordless phone to use.
2. An older child can call the weather and time phone numbers. Write them on a piece of cardboard and keep it near the phone. This can be your child's "telephone book". Add other numbers of friends when your child can do the first two numbers.

Photo Opportunity

Take a picture of this activity and show it to friends or family

Home Learning Enabler
Kindergarten
Math

#10 Patterns and Sequences of Letters and Numbers

REASON

To learn math concepts including recognizing numbers and combinations of numbers.

MATERIALS

A real telephone. License plate numbers you write down on a walk outside.

TIME NEEDED

5-10 minutes.

HOW TO

1. Think up an example of an emergency and discuss it with your child. Talk about how to get help.
2. Write emergency help phone numbers on a piece of cardboard to add to the child's "phone book". Include fire, rescue, a relative and a neighbor.
3. Act out an emergency. Say "ring, ring" and you play the part of the person being called. Let your child tell you the help he or she needs. Then change roles.
4. Another day, on a walk outside, look at license plate numbers (and letters). Copy some down and then match them up on another walk. Tell your child what state they are from.

EVALUATION

Does your child realize that the telephone might be helpful in an emergency?

EASIER AND HARDER IDEAS

1. A younger child can play a listening game with a toy telephone. When the child picks up the phone, you say "hop on one foot" or "clap your hands".
2. An older child can "collect" license plates. He or she can keep a list of all the state license plates they see over time.

Photo Opportunity

Take a picture of this activity and show it to friends or family

Home Learning Enabler
Kindergarten
Science

#11 Spring is Coming

REASON

To learn that spring is the beginning of the growing season.

MATERIALS

A story book about birds.

TIME NEEDED

5 minutes on several days.

HOW TO

1. Call your child's attention to birds you see or trees that are starting to bud.
2. Bring some branches from a forsythia bush or other flowering shrub or tree into the home and put them in warm water.
3. Ask your child to add fresh warm water to the vase or jar with the branch(es) every 2 or 3 days. It takes 3 to 4 weeks for these "dead" branches to blossom.
4. Look for other signs of spring with your child: grass turning green, flowers and birds.
5. Read or tell your child a story about birds. Remember, you can make up and tell a story about birds while riding in the car. Put your child's name into the story.

EVALUATION

Did your child become more aware of changes that come with spring?

EASIER AND HARDER IDEAS

1. A younger child can make a collage with glue and paper of things he or she finds on a nature walk: pussy willow, twigs, grass, etc.
2. An older child can keep a "journal" for the forsythia (or other) branches placed in water. Record the progress (or lack of it) every day.

Photo Opportunity

Take a picture of this activity and show it to friends or family

Home Learning Enabler
Kindergarten
Science

#12 Everything Alive Starts Small and then Grows

REASON

To build self-esteem. To understand concepts about growing things found in science.

MATERIALS

Pictures or story books about babies, baby animals and small plants that will grow.

TIME NEEDED

5-10 minutes.

HOW TO

1. Talk about how everything alive starts small and then grows. Look at pictures or story books about babies, baby animals, and seedling plants.
2. Discuss the concept that growing takes time.
3. Ask your child to tell you about something he or she knows has grown.
4. Talk about how your child has grown. Look at clothes that are too small. Talk about what size clothes he or she may need next year.

EVALUATION

Does your child take an interest in things that are growing? Does he or she observe changes with interest?

EASIER AND HARDER IDEAS

1. A younger child can observe and compare two potted plants. Cover one with a box for a while and notice what happens.
2. An older child can plant seeds outside or indoors in cans or egg cartons. Then keep a "growth calendar" and record change or lack of change.

SAMPLE PARENT LETTER/FEEDBACK SHEET

____
(Date)

Dear Parent:

Did you know you are your child's most important teacher? Would you take __5__ minutes this week and do this activity with your chld? Please tear off the sheet below with your ideas and comments and sent it back to school.

Thank you

____
(Teacher's name)

(Tear Off)

FEEDBACK SHEET

For: _______________
(Child's name)

1. Did you or someone else do the activity with the child? YES_____ NO_____

- -

If YES,

2. How many times did you do the activity? Once_____ More than Once _____

3. How much time did the activity take? 0 ---------- 15 mins. ---------- more than 30 mins.

4. Did you enjoy this activity with your child? YES_____ NO_____

5. Do you feel your child understood it? YES_____ NO_____

6. Do you feel your child needs more help in this area? YES_____ NO_____

7. Please share any adaptation you may have of this activity, or describe a new activity you would suggest. (Write on the back, if necessary) Thanks for cooperating!

_______________ Signature

_______________ Teacher's name

#1 Encouraging Others

Reason

To develop observation and comparison skills. To practice writing and reading.

Materials Needed

Paper and pencil.

Time Needed

5 - 10 minutes.

How To Do It

1. Discuss with your child how he or she felt when someone said something good about him or her. What types of things did people say? What kinds of things do we need encouragement to do?
2. Talk about how family members might encourage each other.
3. Talk about "what does encouraging others look like?" (Smile, pat on the back, nod, lean toward them). What does encouraging others sound like? ("We can do it, let's go!", "Keep at it", "Good job", "Let's try again").
4. Ask your child to draw a picture showing a way to encourage others.

Evaluation

Does your child think of one way to encourage others? Can he or she say what it looks like? Sounds like?

Easier and Harder Ideas

1. A younger child can join in discussing how to encourage and cheer up others.
2. An older child can write to a friend or family member far away to encourage them.

Computer Idea

Keep an "encouraging others" chart on the computer with a "looks like" and "sounds like" column.

Photo Opportunity

Take a picture of this activity and show it to friends or family

#2 The Cowardly Lion

Reason

To build listening, speaking and writing skills. to sharpen observation and analysis skills.

Materials Needed

Paper, pencil, a book or video tape of The Wizard of Oz.

Time Needed

5 - 10 minutes plus the story or the movie.

How To Do It

1. Ask your child to "agree" or "disagree" with the following sentences:
   "It feels nice when someone helps you finish a difficult job"
   "It feels nice when someone says nice things to you like 'Good job'".
   "It feels good when you help someone with a problem"
   "It feels bad when someone calls you a nasty name"
   "It feels good when you are left out of a game"

2. Discuss with your child what encouragement means. Read or watch the movie The Wizard of Oz. Talk about the encouragement the cowardly lion needed.

3. Explain how saying nice things gives people courage.

4. Talk about how encouragement can be helpful.

5. Make an encouragement chart of what the lion did and said and of what Dorothy did and said.

Evaluation

Did your child find at least one encouraging thing that was said?

Easier and Harder Ideas

1. A younger child can think up more sentences about things that make a person feel good or bad.
2. An older child can think up activities that one particularly needs encouragement with, and what could be said to encourage.

Computer Activity

Put the "Encouragement Chart" lists on the computer and print them out. If your child has been encouraging, make a "did - said" chart for them, by name also.

#3 The Cooperation Box

Reason

To understand that words can make people feel good or bad. To increase media literacy.

Materials Needed

Box with a slot in the top, such as a shoebox, paper, pencil, crayons or markers.

Time Needed

5 - 10 minutes.

How To Do It

1. Discuss cooperation at the family dinner table and list "build ups" and "put downs" that people say to each other.
2. Make a cooperation box together. Tape down the lid and decorate it. When your child or a family member have cooperated well, ask your child to draw a picture about what they did and write or dictate about it. Put the picture in the box. Put helpful ideas in words in the box too.
3. Once a week, maybe on Sunday, share the pictures and talk about them. Compare how people feel with cooperation and with "build ups" versus "put downs".
4. Talk about the conversations on TV. Keep track and record. Are there more "build ups" or "put downs"? Why is this? Do people cooperate? How?

Evaluation

Does your child find at least one example of cooperation to draw about?

Easier and Harder Ideas

1. A younger child can dictate how he or she could be cooperative in the family. Put this in the box.
2. An older child can make a graph of the "build ups" and "put downs" on TV. Discuss whether making people feel bad is worth getting a laugh.

Computer Idea

Keep a cooperation word bank on the computer and print it out.

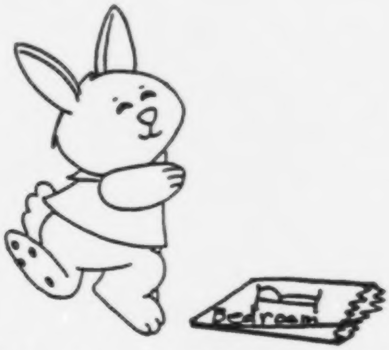
Home Learning Enabler
Observing, Comparing

Kindergarten - First Grade
Language Arts, History, Geography

#4 We Bags

Reason

To build languages and writing skills. To build interaction in the family.



Materials Needed

Paper bags, crayons or markers.

Time Needed

10 - 15 minutes.

How To Do It

1. Ask your child to pick one family member or relative, he or she wants to know more about.
2. Get together with that person. Ask your child to discuss with and ask the person about things they like to do, favorite foods and books, and places they have visited. Your child should tell about his or her own favorites also.
3. Give your child two paper bags to decorate with pictures of their own favorite things and their partner's.
4. At dinner have the two introduce each other by telling about their partner's contribution to the bag. This may have to be at holiday time if the partner lives far away.

Evaluation

Does your child enjoy learning about the person selected? Try it again with a different person.

Easier and Harder Ideas

1. A younger child can talk to a member of the immediate family. Make a bag with two or three things.
2. An older child can look up historical events or geographical places that an older relative may have told about.

Computer Idea

Keep the stories on a computer in a "Family File". Let your child dictate a story to you.

Photo Opportunity

Take a picture of this activity and show it to friends or family

#5 Picture the Problems

Reason

To practice problem solving. To build listening skills and vocabulary.

Materials Needed

None. Paper and crayons or markers, if desired.

Time Needed

3-5 minutes. (These can be done one or two at a time in the car if that is a good time).

How To Do It

1. Talk about the following sample problems one at a time:
   A cat stuck in a tree; a broken window; a flat tire on a bicycle; a dropped ice cream cone; a kite stuck on a roof; a child late for school; no lunch in a lunch box; mud on your clothes. Add others you both think up.

2. Ask your child:
   What do you think the problem is? Why?
   What do you think you should do? Tell three ideas or solutions.
   Choose one idea and tell why you chose it.
   Explain the criteria you used.

3. Have your child ask you some problems and you tell three ideas or solutions. Choose one, and explain your criteria.

4. Ask your child to draw pictures of the different problems.

Evaluation

Does your child come up with three ideas for a problem and choose one to explain?

Easier and Harder Ideas

1. A younger child can help think up more problems.

2. An older child can play "what if" or "what would you do" with more serious problems. Try "what if I were lost", "what would we do in an earthquake" and others.

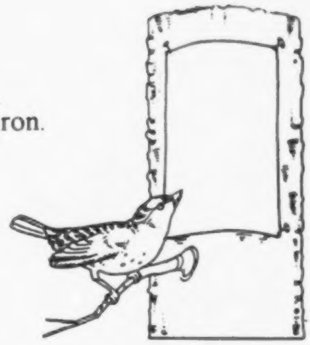
Computer Idea

Put the list of unsolved problems on the computer and print them out for the next car trip.

#6 Adopt a Tree

Reason

To investigate trees and learn more about one species.



Materials Needed

A tree, a book on trees, two large pieces of waxed paper, an electric iron.

Time Needed

5 - 10 minutes.

How To Do It

1. Ask your child to look at trees and notice one in particular to "adopt". Bring three or four leaves inside, complete with stem.
2. Look up this tree in a book on trees, to learn its name and some of the characteristics of its leaves. Talk about the spine, the veins, the number of points and the several shapes of leaves: a maple has three main points and an oak leave has five.
3. Talk about the characteristics of different leaves and what causes a leaf to fall.
4. With the waxed paper, lay out the leaves and place another sheet of waxed paper on top. Iron over these two with a medium hot iron to make a permanent leaf collage. Label the leaves.

Evaluation

Does your child enjoy learning more about one tree?

Easier and Harder Ideas

1. A younger child can pick up several leaves and learn the names of those trees. Jump in a leaf pile and talk about what your child hears and smells.
2. An older child can research the various types of evergreen trees and compare their similarities and differences. Or, an older child can choose three species of tree in the yard, the neighborhood, or a park, and count the number of each.

Computer Idea

Make a graph on a spread sheet program of the number of leaves in different leaf collages you make. Or, with the number of trees counted of each species, make a "pie" chart if your computer does this easily.

#7 Forcing Forsythia

Reason

To develop observation skills. To analyze cause and effect when dormant buds or bulbs are brought to life.

Materials Needed

Branches with buds from a forsythia or pussy willow bush. Amaryllis or paper white narcissus bulbs can be used also. Paper and pencil.

Time Needed

5 - 10 minutes every few days.

How To Do It

1. Talk about bringing the forsythia branches (or other plant) indoors and putting it in water. Talk about the indoors providing a warm steady environment.
2. Ask your child to record what happens each day. Notice how long before the buds fully form. How long is it until the blossom appears? Talk about the cause and effect.
3. Make note of how long it takes from forming the bud until the blossom appears in a "plant growth data log".
4. A week later, bring in another set of branches or start an amaryllis or narcissus bulb. Cut one bulb in two and observe the ovary around the seed.
5. Compare the progress of the two "experiments", started a week apart.
6. Water them as needed.

Evaluation

Does your child enjoy "forcing the forsythia to bloom"?

Easier and Harder Ideas

1. A younger child can water cut flowers from the garden or the grocery store.
2. An older child might enjoy "starting" cut off edges of potato tops and carrot tops in saucers of water and record the plant growth data.

Computer Idea

Type in the "plant growth data log" into a computer and print it out.

Home Learning Enabler
Observing, Comparing, Hypothesizing

Kindergarten - First Grade
Science

#8 Record the Daily Weather

Reason

To develop observation and comparison skills. To practice writing.

Materials Needed

Calendar, pencil and paper, an outdoor thermometer.

Time Needed

3 - 5 minutes almost daily.

How To Do It

1. Discuss the various weather elements with your child: clouds, wind, rain (or precipitation), temperature and sun.
2. On a calendar, record the daily weather for an extended period of time. On Sunday nights (or any night you choose) note if there has been a big change from the week before.
3. Discuss the changes in the recordings when the season changes. Predict what the temperature will read in the summer. In the spring? In the fall?
4. Watch the weather report together on TV. Notice the elements the reporter talks about: High, low, rain clouds, etc. Listen to the weather report on the radio and read the weather prediction in the newspaper. Compare your child's recordings.

Evaluation

Does your child enjoy recording what the temperature is for several days?

Easier and Harder Ideas

1. A younger child can collect rain water in a dish. Measure the amount collected and record it if possible.
2. An older child can learn more about the resources the weatherman uses. Look up weather resources in the library.

Computer Idea

If you have an on-line computer service or are on the Internet, look up the weather information.

Photo Opportunity

Take a picture of this activity and show it to friends or family.

Home Learning Enabler
Observing, Analyzing

Kindergarten - First Grade
Language Arts

#9 Family Member of the Week

Reason

To practice reading and writing skills. To practice saying positive things about other people.

Materials Needed

Paper, pencil, pictures of family members if possible.

Time Needed

5 - 10 minutes.

How To Do It

1. Place the names of all the family members in a box. Each week, at dinner, draw out one of the names in the box. This person becomes "Family Member of the Week".
2. Ask the family to say the things they like about the chosen person. Be patient and talk about everyone having many good qualities.
3. Ask your child to write down a list of six to ten concrete statements.
4. Put a picture of the person, or draw one, and their list on the bulletin board or on the refrigerator with magnets.
5. First do the immediate family. Later, do family members that may be further away and send them the list in a letter.

Evaluation

Does your child enjoy writing the list? Does your child enjoy hearing good things about himself or herself?

Easier and Harder Ideas

1. A younger child may want to do this two or three times a week so his or her turn comes sooner.
2. An older child can start writing letters to more distant family members to gather information for the time it is their turn.

Computer Idea

Put the Family Member of the Week lists in a file on the computer.

#10 Counting by Two's

Reason

To develop math skills. To build observation skills.

Materials Needed

Tape measure or yard stick, thermometer.

Time Needed

5 -10 minutes.

How To Do It

1. Talk about counting with your child. Then talk about counting by two's.
2. Ask him or her to count by two's on a yard stick or tape measure.
3. Look at a thermometer together and count by two's. Talk about why this would tell you more than counting by five's or ten's with a thermometer. Notice the thermometer is marked by two's.
4. Practice counting by 5's or 10's. Look at a clock.
5. Measure the furniture in a room or the room itself counting by two's.

Evaluation

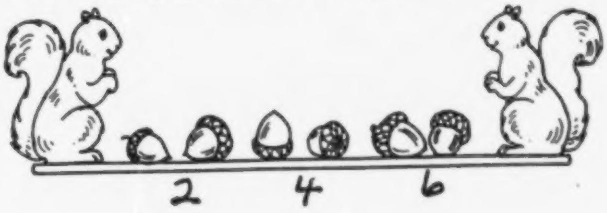
Did your child succeed in counting by two's with the thermometer?

Easier and Harder Ideas

1. A younger child can count sets of two and sets of five.
2. An older child can practice counting and counting by sets of odd numbers like 7 and 13.

Computer Idea

Using the numbers on a computer, see how far your child can take counting by 2's or by 5's.



Home Learning Enabler
First Grade
Language Arts
Thinking Skills: Sequencing
Summarizing

#1 Have Your Child Tell You a Story

REASON

To develop verbal skills and vocabulary. To practice telling a story with a beginning, a middle and an end.

MATERIALS

Paper lunch bag or small brown bag, crayons or markers, a twist tie and enough newspaper to stuff in the paper bag.

TIME NEEDED

10 minutes.

HOW TO

1. Invite your child to make a puppet. First he or she colors a face on the paper bag. Then stuff it with newspaper or other paper stuffing. Close the bag and fasten it with the twist tie.
2. Discuss with your child whether more materials are needed (and available). Possibilities are yarn for hair, tape or glue, faces cut from a magazine.
3. Encourage your child to tell you about the puppet. Is it a person or an animal? What is it's name?
4. Ask your child to tell you a story with the puppet instead of you reading a story to your child. Tell your child the story needs a beginning a middle and an end. What is its title? (Giving titles gives practice in summarizing).

AGE

5, 6, 7, 8

EVALUATION

Does your child enjoy telling the story? Does the story have a beginning? A middle? An end?

EASIER AND HARDER IDEAS

1. A younger child can tell a story about a picture he or she has drawn. Ask him or her to make up one or more titles for the picture.
2. An older child might enjoy making several puppets on different days. Then when he or she tells a story it can have different characters with different voices. (Note: Even a train or a car puppet can have a voice).

COMPUTER IDEA

If you have a home computer with word processing capability, ask your child to dictate the story to you. Print it out and let him or her color pictures for it.

Photo Opportunity

Take a picture of this activity and show it to friends or family

Home Learning Enabler
First Grade
Science
Thinking Skills: Hypothesizing
Cause and Effect
Problem Solving

#2 Float & Sink

REASON
To test ideas (this is called hypothesizing) and see if they work.

MATERIALS
Tops of egg cartons, toothpaste, small piece of paper for a "sail," objects to float or sink, roaster pan, sink or bathtub full of water.

TIME NEEDED
5 minutes.

HOW TO

1. Make a boat(s) out of the top(s) of egg cartons.
2. Float these on the water.
3. Add objects such as a pebble, a button, a penny and see how many the boat will hold without sinking.
4. Make a sail with a triangle of paper and a toothpick. Stick it on the boat with clay or chewing gum. (A toothpick hole in the boat will make it sink. Ask your child if he or she thinks this will happen, and test it if you have two boats).
5. Blow on the sail and see what happens. Will it sail?
6. Will the boat sail carrying objects? Ask your child if he or she thinks the boat will sink faster with a toothpick hole in it then without.

AGE
4, 5, 6, 7

EVALUATION
Does your child enjoy this activity? Does he or she suggest more things to try to float and sink with?

EASIER AND HARDER IDEAS

1. A younger child can play "float and sink" without the boat. Try a sponge, a piece of steel wool, a straw and a piece of paper.
2. An older child can learn more about surface area helping boats (or anything) to float. Look up surface area and boats in an encyclopedia or dictionary.

Photo Opportunity

Take a picture of this activity and show it to friends or family

Home Learning Enabler
First Grade
Social Studies
Science
Thinking Skills: Observation
Sequencing
Problem Solving
Cause and Effect

#3 Making Cornmeal Muffins

REASON
To understand that recipes can begin in other times and other places. To observe that a recipe has a sequence and the ingredients make something new happen.

MATERIALS
Baking mix (Bisquick or Jiffy or other), sugar, cornmeal, milk eggs, utensils bowl, paper muffin cups and muffin pan.

TIME NEEDED
5-10 minutes.

HOW TO

1. Layout the bowl, utensils and ingredients for cornmeal muffins. Talk about the North American Indians making cornmeal from corn and teaching this to the Pilgrims a long time ago.

2. Follow the recipe on the baking mix box for muffins but substitute 3/4 cup of cornmeal for 3/4 cup of baking mix.

3. Talk with your child about what (dry) ingredients are put in the bowl first and what (wet) ingredients are put in the bowl next. Let him or her pour them in the bowl.

4. Let your child stir the muffins. Talk about the consistency: is it runny? Stiff? What will happen in the oven?

5. Let your child put the muffin papers in the muffin pan. Bake and serve at dinner or breakfast.

EVALUATION
Did your child enjoy baking muffins? Did he or she try a bite?

EASIER AND HARDER IDEAS

1. A younger child can make French toast. The amount of each ingredient is very flexible with French toast. Precise measuring is not needed.

2. An older child can look up baking powder in the encyclopedia and learn more about what makes muffins "rise".

Photo Opportunity

Take a picture of this activity and show it to friends or family

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Home Learning Enabler
First Grade
Language Arts
Thinking Skills: Decision Making
Problem Solving

#4 Planning and Doing

REASON
To practice decision making, predicting what will happen and trying out the idea.

MATERIALS
Furniture, books or toys in your child's room.

TIME NEEDED
5-30 minutes.

HOW TO

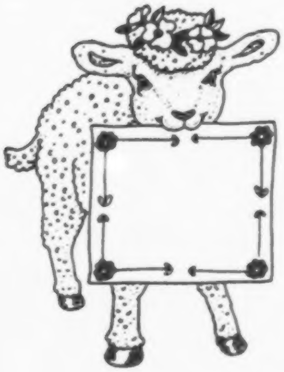
1. Discuss with your child how his or her books and toys are stored.
2. Discuss a plan for improving the storage that you both like. New boxes or shelves? More color or decoration of some kind?
3. Discuss how this will help him or her to do something differently. (Either play in a different way or pick up in a different way or other implications. Perhaps a younger child will not be able to "mess up" the toys in the new way).
4. Plan a day and time to try the change and do it.

AGE
6-10

EVALUATION
Does your child understand that something he or she decided could really be done? Did he or she explore two or three possibilities in detail?

EASIER AND HARDER IDEAS

1. A younger child might just decide how to rearrange books on a book shelf. Should all the large ones and small ones be together? Or should they be sorted by color? Or should they be sorted by favorite and non-favorite? Re-do the book shelf in the way chosen.
2. An older child can plan to rearrange a whole room and draw a diagram of the room plan. Be sure to carry out at least part of the plan.



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Home Learning Enabler
First Grade
Math
Science
Thinking Skills: Categorizing

#5 Adding and Subtracting Books

REASON
To practice adding and subtracting with quantities of familiar items.

MATERIALS
A group of 6, 8, or 10 children's books, or any similar item even soft drink cans.

TIME NEEDED
5-10 minutes.

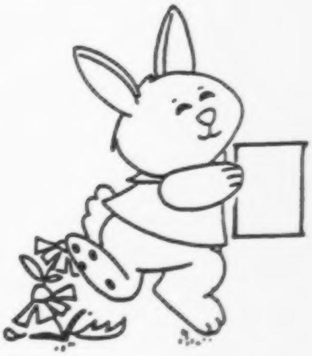
HOW TO

1. Ask your child to move a set (or group) of four books (or cans) from one place to another.
2. Then ask your child to move a set of five books (or cans) to that place. How many does he or she have now?
3. Keeping the number within the child's understanding, add more books or more cans in sets.
4. Now ask your child to remove/subtract three cans or books. How many does he or she have left? Subtract other numbers and count what is left. This can be used for picking up toys also. Ask "Can you subtract four toys from the floor and put them away?" Or, "two sets of three?"

EVALUATION
Did your child understand the quantity he or she was moving?

EASIER AND HARDER IDEAS

1. When a younger child is playing with two of something (toys, cars), say "I see you have a set of two cars." Or, if your child is eating "a set of two crackers."
2. An older child can use more categories and pick up a set of three small books and five large books. Two sets of ten can be loaded in a box. Work up to larger numbers.



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Home Learning Enabler
First Grade
Math
Thinking Skills: Decision Making
Categorizing

#6 Add and Subtract Boxes

REASON
To encourage children to make choices based on size and shape. To practice counting.

MATERIALS
Discarded grocery or other boxes from cereal, pudding, raisins and gifts. Tape or white glue.

TIME NEEDED
5-10 minutes.

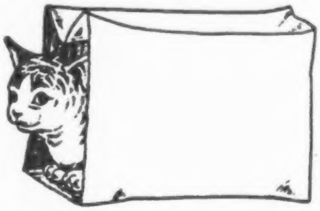
HOW TO

1. Tell your child that he or she can pick out some boxes and make a "box sculpture" or "box collage."
2. Let your child tape or glue the boxes together in some interesting way.
3. Count the boxes the child used and write the number on the collage.
4. Ask your child if he or she wants to add more boxes to this collage when you have more boxes. Talk about the numbers, the colors and the sizes.
5. Use the box collage as a centerpiece on the kitchen table, if it is not too large.

EVALUATION
Does your child take pleasure in choosing just which box will be right for his or her collage?

EASIER AND HARDER IDEAS

1. A younger child can play grocery store with the boxes, perhaps with real pennies.
2. An older child can measure the boxes used with a ruler or tape measure. Record the number of inches tall the collage is, and/or the number of inches wide.



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Home Learning Enabler
First Grade
Math
Science
Thinking Skills: Thinking Skills
Sequencing
Categorizing

#7 Food Wrap Up

REASON
To understand that foods dry out and change if they are not protected when they are left over. To practice counting skills.

MATERIALS
Left over food from a meal, plastic wrap or bags, or tinfoil.

TIME NEEDED
5 minutes.

HOW TO

1. After a meal, have your child help you wrap up the left overs. Talk about the sequence: first you select the wrap that is best; then you select a container the right size; then you put it in the refrigerator or leave it on a counter.

2. Talk about how different wraps are different: tinfoil will not go into a microwave oven; plastic wrap and containers cannot be put in the oven and so forth.

3. Talk about the food groups and which foods need to be cold to be preserved. Discuss categories of hot, cold or room temperature for foods.

4. Discuss how foods change if not wrapped (dry out), or refrigerated (spoil).

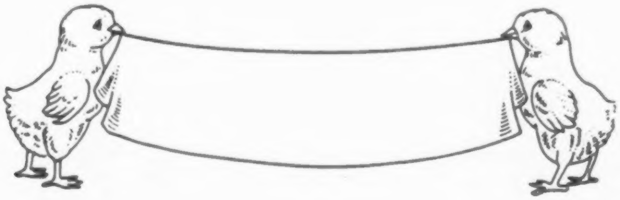
AGE
5, 6, 7, 8

EVALUATION
Doe your child enjoy helping wrap the "food packages?" Does he or she understand that some things like milk, have to be kept cold?

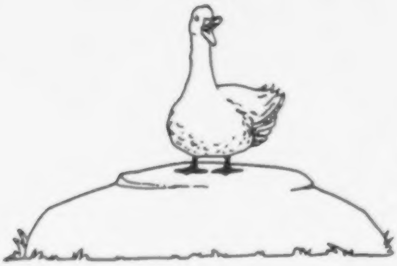
EASIER AND HARDER IDEAS

1. A younger child can help wrap foods for a picnic.

2. An older child can learn more about the work world by looking up information about supplying food and packaging foods for sale.



Home Learning Enabler
First Grade
Math
Science
Thinking Skills: Thinking Skills
Observation
Cause and Effect
Problem Solving
Prediction



#8 Daylight Savings Time

REASON
To observe changes that come with daylight savings time (in fall or spring) to consider how this affects how people do things.

MATERIALS
A clock.

TIME NEEDED
5 minutes.

HOW TO

1. Talk about daylight savings time in the fall or spring, right before it changes. Have your child predict how it will affect him or her. Write your child's predictions down.
2. Then observe what happens after the change and check the predictions.
3. What problems or new behaviors does this cause?
4. Look at the clock and then set it back (in fall) or forward (in spring) one hour. Practice the saying "Fall back; Spring forward.
5. Discuss the earth's travels around the sun. When the earth tilts towards the sun we have longer, hotter days (summer).

AGE
6, 7, 8

EVALUATION
Does your child enjoy noticing the clock and helping to set it for daylight savings time?

EASIER AND HARDER IDEAS

1. A younger child can practice saying the time from a digital clock.
2. A older child can consider the problems facing people before daylight savings time was used (going to school in the dark and so forth). Consider the problem solving thinking done then by people with these problems. What would happen if daylight savings time was two hours different? Plot on a chart how the hours would change and how activities might he affected. (For instance going to bed in summer two hours before it got dark).

Photo Opportunity

Take a picture of this activity and show it to friends or family

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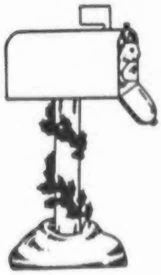
Home Learning Enabler
First Grade
Math
Science
Thinking Skills: Thinking Skills
Observation
Sequencing
Categorizing



#9 Counting Snowballs

REASON
To practice identifying quantities and addition and subtraction, with objects children can see and handle. To learn about the outdoors.

MATERIALS
Snowballs, rocks, or twigs.

TIME NEEDED
5 minutes.

HOW TO

1. Ask your child to make 5 to 10 snowballs. Or to select 5 to 10 rocks or twigs if there is no snow.
2. Do simple addition problems. How many do 2 snowballs plus 3 snowballs make? 5 and 5?
3. Do simple subtraction problems. How many sticks are left when you subtract 2 sticks from 10 sticks? 4 from 10?
4. Be sure to have your child touch each thing he or she counts.
5. Talk about why snowballs melt and why rocks or twigs do not. (Heat does not affect them the same way).

EVALUATION
Does your child add or subtract at least one or two numbers correctly? Did he or she touch each item?

EASIER AND HARDER IDEAS
1. A younger child can count things (laundry, steps, cans) anytime there are 4 or fewer (or up to whatever number the child knows for sure).
2. Older children can try multiplying with rocks or pebbles, snowballs or twigs.

COMPUTER IDEA
In a large font (#20 to #40) on a word processing system let your child type in capital "Os" and count them. Then do capital "Xs". Print out his or her "computer snowballs and twigs."

Photo Opportunity

Take a picture of this activity and show it to friends or family

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Home Learning Enabler
First Grade
Math
Thinking Skills: Thinking Skills
Comparing
Summarizing

#10 Family Graph

REASON
To think about members of our family and to compare sizes with a graph.

MATERIALS
Something to make a graph out of: blocks, squares of toilet paper, checkers, or any type of item that has many of the same size.

TIME NEEDED
5 minutes.

HOW TO

1. Talk about members of the family. Talk about their height. Ask your child to estimate relative heights and lay out blocks for each family member. (A tall person, a short person, two very short people or whatever).

2. Now try this graph with the items or counters such as blocks, for the different size people, on the floor beside each other.

3. Measure the family member with a yard stick or tape measure. If they know their height, ask them and write it down.

4. Try doing a graph with one inch for one foot on a piece of paper and compare the "bars" or lines for each family member.

5. Ask your child to make a name for the graph (or a story) about the family. (One child said "constant chaos" for his story).

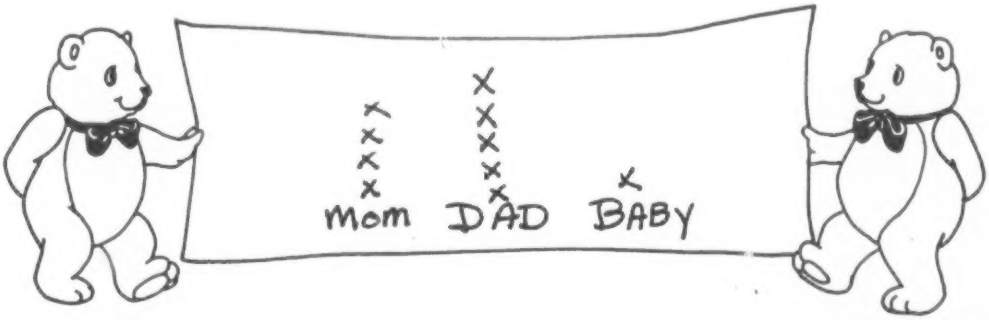
EVALUATION
Do children identify one or two similarities or differences in family member's heights?

EASIER AND HARDER IDEAS

1. A younger child can compare how family members help in the family. Does the child see himself or herself as helping occasionally?

2. An older child can graph other things, either with a ruler, or with estimates of heights for buildings or bridges, perhaps.

COMPUTER IDEA
If you have a computer with a spreadsheet program, do a "Family Height Graph" on the spread sheet. Make a column for each family member and let your child dictate to you how many Xs or Os to put for that person's height. Let your child press "enter" for the Xs if possible.



Home Learning Enabler
First Grade
Social Studies
Science
Thinking Skills: Thinking Skills
Observation
Noticing
Valuing

#11 Family Pet History

REASON

To learn about a different time, when parents were young. To learn about pets and to value special pets.

MATERIALS

None.

TIME NEEDED

5 minutes.

HOW TO

1. Talk with your child about a pet you had or a friend had when you were young.
2. Tell your child the pet's name, size, color and activities. Tell two or three especially charming things the pet did.
3. Ask your child about pets they have seen and what they do.
4. Ask your child to ask grandparents aunts or uncles or other relatives, about pets they had when they were young. Also, ask older people that are neighbors and friends.

EVALUATION

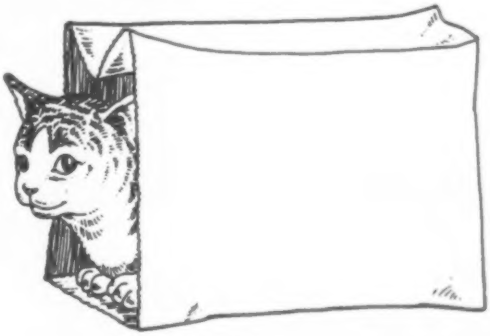
Does your child enjoy hearing the different stories? Can your child pick out some things that were different in "the old days"?

EASIER AND HARDER IDEAS

1. A younger child will enjoy watching his or her own goldfish. One four-year old went home to talk to his fish when "the big boys" would not let him play.
2. An older child can record information about a pets shape, weight, movement, breathing, heartbeat and body covering.

COMPUTER IDEA

If you have a computer, let your child dictate a story (or stories) he or she has heard about pets to you. Print it out to be his or her "pet book."



Home Learning Enabler
First Grade
Science
Math
Thinking Skills: Thinking Skills
Observation
Categorizing

#12 "Make a Zoo"

REASON
To practice counting skills and to learn more about zoo animals.

MATERIALS
A trip to the zoo, if possible or a library storybook about the zoo. A cardboard box or strips of paper.

TIME NEEDED
5-10 minutes in addition to the trip to the zoo.

HOW TO

1. Talk about your trip to the zoo or the zoo story book from the library. How many animals are in the cages? What kinds of animals are there?
2. Talk about why wild animals are kept in cages at the zoo.
3. Draw lines on the box or lay the strips of paper on the floor to make a "cage."
4. Let your child decide how many toy animals to put in the cage. Add some. Then subtract some.
5. Ask your child to draw some zoo animals. Let him or her decide on the number to draw, ahead of time.

EVALUATION
Was your child able to count the number of animals accurately?

EASIER AND HARDER IDEAS

1. A younger child (and an older child!) can have toy pick up time be number time and count the sets of four or five items picked up.
2. An older child can look up different zoo animals in an encyclopedia. Ask him or her to figure out the square feet of cage space an animal will need.

COMPUTER IDEA
Look up zoo animals on a CDROM encyclopedia.

Photo Opportunity

Take a picture of this activity and show it to friends or family

SAMPLE PARENT LETTER/FEEDBACK SHEET

__________ (Date)

Dear Parent:

Did you know you are your child's most important teacher? Would you take __5__ minutes this week and do this activity with your chld? Please tear off the sheet below with your ideas and comments and sent it back to school.

Thank you

__________ (Teacher's name)

(Tear Off)

FEEDBACK SHEET

For: __________ (Child's name)

1. Did you or someone else do the activity with the child? YES_____ NO_____

- -

If YES,

2. How many times did you do the activity? Once_____ More than Once _____

3. How much time did the activity take?
----
0 15 mins. more than 30 mins.

4. Did you enjoy this activity with your child? YES_____ NO_____

5. Do you feel your child understood it? YES_____ NO_____

6. Do you feel your child needs more help in this area? YES_____ NO_____

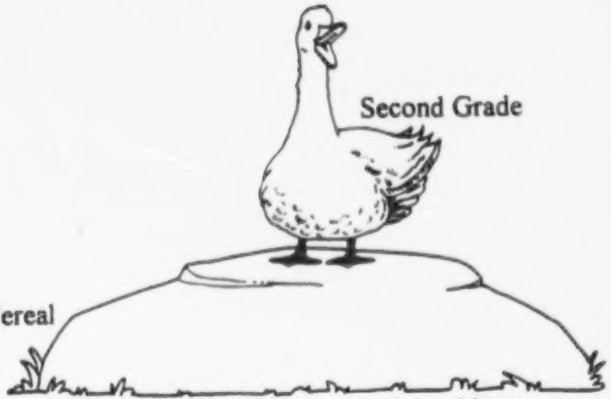
7. Please share any adaptation you may have of this activity, or describe a new activity you would suggest. (Write on the back, if necessary) Thanks for cooperating!

__________ Signature

__________ Teacher's name

Home Learning Enablers
Thinking Skills:
Observing
Comparing
Hypothesizing

Second Grade



#1 Flying Cereal

Reason

To learn that friction causes static electricity. To learn static electricity can cause light objects to attract or repel each other.

What You Need

Clear plastic cup, plastic spoon, square of plastic wrap, rubber band, scrap of wool material, 7 pieces of dry cereal such as Rice Crispies, Wheaties or puffed rice.

Time Needed

5-10 minutes.

How to Do It

1. Ask your child to assemble the cereal cup with the cereal inside and the plastic wrap held on over the top by the rubber band.
2. Ask your child to experiment with the wool, spoon and assembled cup to see what he or she can get the cereal to do. (Don't tell more about it yet)
3. Experiment and talk about any discoveries. Talk about the RUBBING - FRICTION RELATIONSHIP.
4. Ask your child to predict the number of pieces of cereal he or she can get to stick to the plastic wrap when the cup is right side up.
5. Write down predictions and results. Try different kinds of cereal.

Evaluation

Does your child enjoy showing his or her experiment to other family members? Asking for and recording their predictions?

Easier and Harder Ideas

1. A younger child can count out different cereals and practice shaking the cup, and draw a picture of what happened.
2. An older child can experiment with static electricity such as walking across a wool rug in winter and touching a metal object such as a lamp.

Computer Idea

Make a graph with a spread sheet program comparing the number of pieces of cereal that would stick to the plastic wrap. Include cream of wheat grains, and wheat chex or rice chex for variety. Decorate the graph with hand drawings or a computer picture.

Home Learning Enabler
Observing, Cause and Effect

Second Grade
Language Arts, Writing, Reading

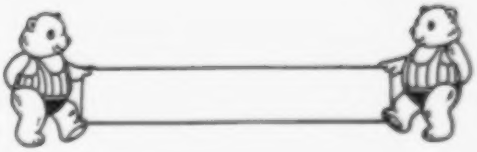
#2 Write or Draw a Learning Log

Reason

To develop observation, memory, recall, and writing skills.

Materials Needed

A notebook of paper and pencils.



Time Needed

5 - 10 minutes

How To Do It

1. Discuss with your child something new he or she learned this week. It can be something from school or from a Home Learning Enabler
2. Write "Learning Log" on the notebook or paper and ask your child to write about what he or she learned. Draw a picture to go with the paragraph.
3. Send the learning log in a letter to grandparent s and other relatives. Write more every week or every month. Talk with your child during the week about what he or she will include.

Evaluation

Does your child think of one or two things to include in the learning log?

Easier and Harder Ideas

1. A younger child can draw pictures for their learning log.
2. An older child can write a longer learning log and look up more information to go into it.

Computer Idea

Write up the Learning Log on a word processor computer program and print it out.

Photo Opportunity

Take a picture of this activity and show it to friends or family

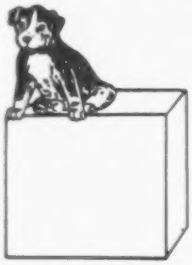
#3 How Many Boxes?

Reason

To practice estimating and predicting (or hypothesizing) geometric space and space needed.

Materials Needed

Large cardboard box or packing crate; many smaller boxes such as shoeboxes and cereal boxes; tape measure, ruler or yard stick.



Time Needed

5 - 10 minutes

How To Do It

1. Ask your child to measure the perimeter or outside edge of the large box and the smaller boxes.

2. Ask your child to guess or predict how many smaller boxes it will take to fill up the larger box. Use the measurements, if possible. Write down the number.

3. Try the smaller boxes in the large box and count the actual number needed and compare.

4. Next, try to measure your pet, if you have one (or a pet the child would like). Measure your yard also if you have one.

5. How large a cage or habitat would this pet need? (A goldfish bowl would be different than a dog run) Guess how many boxes would fill this area.

Evaluation

Does your child enjoy guessing the number of boxes that would be needed?

Easier and Harder Ideas

1. A younger child can help collect the boxes and fill a smaller box or crate.

2. An older child can study zoo animals and predict the size cage different animals would need. Then draw this, using one inch for one foot on paper. Ask your child to figure the volume and area, if your child has had this in school.

Maps and TV

Reason

To build historical and geographical relationships. To develop skills in comparing.

Materials Needed

A world map, a U.S. map, and a map of your town or city. Daily newspaper.

Parent's Time Needed

5-10 minutes

How to Do It

1. Put up the maps near each other, and if possible near the TV area.
2. Mark the places your child knows: your city, places he or she has visited and where friends live on all three maps. Talk about how big or small it looks on the map.
3. Look at the daily newspaper. Use movable markers to show where headline stories are taking place. Talk about how the local headlines seem much smaller on the U.S. map and the world map.
4. Mark TV news stories on the maps with a different color tack or marker.

How to Tell If It Worked

Does your child begin to look things up on the map on her own?

Easier and Harder Ideas

1. Let a younger child mark directions to a friends house on a street map.
2. Have an older child make small flag miniatures and use them for markers for the world news.

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#5 From Ice to Steam

Reason

To observe how water changes from state to state and to predict how long this takes to occur. To practice scientific investigation.

Materials Needed

Water, ice cubes, sauce pan or tea kettle.

Time Needed

5 minutes

How To Do It

1. Talk to your child about water changing to ice and about water changing to steam.
2. Predict how long it takes for an ice cube to melt. Try putting one in a dish and check on it every 15 to 30 minutes. Time and record this "data" for this "experiment".
3. At the same time, fill an ice tray and check how long it takes to freeze. Time and record.
4. Ask "what if?" questions, "What if the ice cubes were different shapes? Would it make a difference in how fast it melted or froze?"
5. Ask how can you keep ice from melting if you don't have refrigerators or freezers?

Evaluation

Does your child enjoy discussing his or her experiments at the family dinner table? Does he or she enjoy asking other family members for more "what if?" questions?

Easier and Harder Ideas

1. A younger child can compare several dishes with one, two, three and four ice cubes and see how fast each dishfull melts.
2. An older child can look up the Ice Age in an encyclopedia or on a CD Rom and talk about implications it had for the earth.

#6 Animal Math

Reason

To learn more about one or more particular animals. To practice math and science skills.

Materials Needed

Materials on the one animal chosen: library book, encyclopedia, or CD Rom Zoo Animals disk.

Time Needed

5 - 10 minutes on two days.

How To Do It

1. Ask your child to draw a picture of his or her favorite animal.
2. Write a paragraph or two about this animal. Tell about how it moves, eats, and communicates with other animals, or where it lives. This can be sent as part of a letter to grandparents later.
3. Ask your child to write one or two addition and subtraction problems about the animal. (For example: the seal had two baby seals and one got lost. How many are left?)
4. Ask your child to make a graph about how much the animal eats, or how fast it moves.

Evaluation

Did your child enjoy learning more about a favorite animal?

Easier and Harder Ideas

1. A younger child might enjoy gathering information about animal babies. Compare different things or attributes about the babies.
2. An older child can look up vertebrates and invertebrates and start classifying animals in these two categories.

Computer Ideas

Ask your child to write up his or her story on the word processor in a computer. If you have a spread sheet program, make a graph of how much the animal eats, or how fast it moves on the graph. With a CD Rom, look up information about the animal. Do another animal another time.

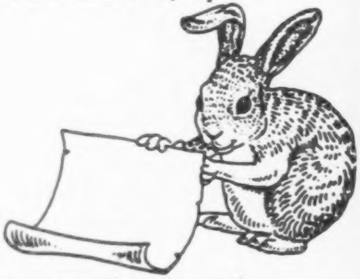
#7 My Favorite Stories

Reason

To encourage your child to combine listening, speaking, reading and writing.

Materials Needed

Library books and your child's books, paper or notebook and pencil, crayons or markers, tape recorder.



Time Needed

5 - 10 minutes.

How To Do It

1. Ask your child to keep a journal of favorite stories read. Color the cover of the journal.
2. Ask your child to write about his or her favorite part of a story. Send this as part of a letter to grandparents or other relatives.
3. Ask your child to record the sequence of a story on a tape recorder. Play it back for other family members.
4. Ask your child what he or she likes best about the favorite story chosen. What is liked least? Which one would be in first place this week? Give it a blue star and record the date. Do the same for next week's first place story. Keep track of any changes.

Evaluation

Does your child enjoy selecting favorite stories?

Easier and Harder Ideas

1. A younger child can color pictures for each of his or her favorite stories.
2. An older child can adapt a favorite story to be a radio or TV show and tape record it or even video tape record it.

Computer Activity

Write about your child's favorite part of a story on the word processor program of a computer. Print it out for your child's book. Let your child type it in, if possible.

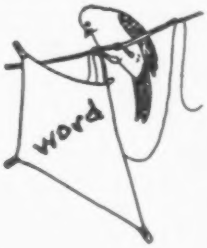
#8 My Word Bank

Reason

To practice spelling words and understanding their meaning. To make a "homemade" dictionary.

Materials Needed

Paper, pencil, crayons or markers, magnets or blocks with letters on them or letters cut out of felt or sandpaper.



Time Needed

5 - 10 minutes.

How To Do It

1. Ask your child to write a sentence using pictures for the meaning of the words.
2. Share the way to spell the picture words and ask your child to spell them with the magnets or the blocks or felt letters.
3. When your child can print the word correctly it goes into his or her Word Bank of important words.
4. Look in the dictionary for synonyms of these adult words. Practice writing the ones he or she think are also important for the Word Bank.
5. Ask you child to choose rhyming words for the important words chosen (homonyms). Write these for the Word Bank also.

Evaluation

Does your child enjoy selecting "important" words for the Word Bank? Display the Word Bank on a "Word Wall" if you have space.

Easier and Harder Ideas

1. A younger child can make a homemade dictionary of pictures of important words. Write the word under the picture.
2. An older child can select new words from the adult dictionary and practice with new synonyms.

Computer Idea

Keep the Word Bank on a computer and print it out in a large font.

#9 Family Food Partner

Reason

To practice talking about and spelling many new words.

Materials Needed

Paper and pencil.

Time Needed

5 - 10 minutes.

How To Do It

1. Ask your child to pick a family member to help choose words he or she would like to know more about. These can be words about food, but any subject will do. Ask the family member what their favorite food is. When did they eat it last? How was it cooked?
2. Ask your child to copy a recipe for a food chosen. Talk about any new words.
3. Talk about the four food groups. Cook the recipe together and let your child measure the ingredients.
4. Try to use and talk about all the five senses while doing this: seeing, smelling, tasting, hearing, and feeling.
5. Eat the food cooked.

Evaluation

Does your child enjoy beginning to write his or her own homemade cookbook?

Easier and Harder Ideas

1. A younger child can draw pictures of the steps in the recipes.
2. Play restaurant, and ask your child to write out a menu. Or you write out an elaborate or expensive menu, and discuss the words.

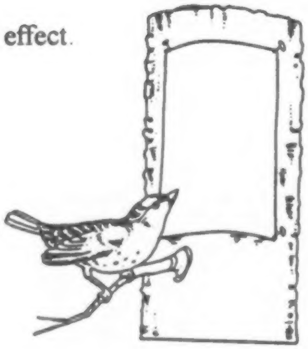
Computer Activity

Ask your child to write the recipes or the menu on a computer. Print it out.

#10 Plants and Food

Reason

To build observation skills. To develop an understanding of cause and effect.



Materials Needed

Radish and carrot seeds, dirt outside or in paper cups inside the home.

Time Needed

5 - 10 minutes.

How To Do It

1. Talk about why we have more fresh fruits and vegetables in the summer than in the winter. Why is this? When the weather is better, what must farmers do in the spring to grow the fresh produce for summer?

2. Plant some seeds such as carrots, and radishes outside if it is warm enough. In a colder climate, use paper cups filled with dirt indoors.

3. Ask your child to keep a Plant/Food Log and record each day what happens. When the first green shoot comes through the dirt, have a celebration.

4. Wash and eat the results of the experiments when they have grown enough to be ready.

Evaluation

Does your child understand that many foods come from plants? Does your child enjoy growing some of his or her own food?

Easier and Harder Ideas

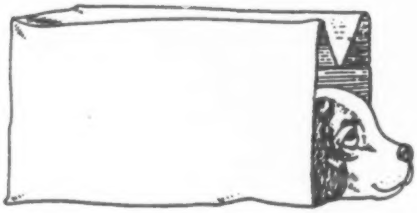
1. A younger child can enjoy filling the cups with dirt and plant one or two seeds..

2. An older child can have a patch in an outdoor garden and select what to plant.

Computer Activity

Look up other plants as they relate to food on a CD Rom.

Home Learning Enabler
Second Grade
Social Studies
Science
Thinking Skills: Planning
Cause and Effect



#14 Signs of Winter

REASON
To understand that the winter climate is different in different parts of the country and the world. To understand that animals prepare for winter in different ways.

MATERIALS
Two or three brown paper lunch bags and markers to draw faces with. Newspaper or other "stuffing" to stuff paper bag puppets and a twist tie or string to tie them with.

TIME NEEDED
5-10 minutes.

HOW TO

1. Talk about winter being different in different parts of the world. For instance, in Florida, it stays fairly warm and in Alaska there is snow around most of the time.

2. Look at picture books of winter and (if you can find them in the library) picture books about animals in winter. Talk about plants in winter. Why do some die and some not die?

3. Talk about winter in your climate. What do you have to do? Bring in the lawn chairs? Get out the snow shovels? Put away the garden hose? Talk about why you do these things.

4. Talk about how animals prepare for winter. Squirrels carry nuts in their mouth and hide them. Bears hibernate and sleep all winter.

5. Make a paper bag puppet for each family member with your child. Ask your child to tell you a story about how each one would prepare for winter. (Get out a coat and mittens?)

EVALUATION
Does your child tell at least one way to prepare for winter? Does he or she understand that you can prepare for a change in climate? Or any change you know is coming?

Home Learning Enabler
Second Grade
Social Studies
Science
Thinking Skills: Planning
Cause and Effect

Signs of Winter

EASIER AND HARDER IDEAS

1. A younger child can go and get his or her mittens and hat and put them in a handy place.

2. An older child can look up winter climates in various countries in an encyclopedia or on a CDROM and compare some: Greenland, Panama, South America and North America are some choices.

Home Learning Enabler
Second Grade
Math
Writing
Thinking Skills: Imagining
Creating

#2 Invented Games

REASON
To practice seeing new relationships and recombining ideas.

MATERIALS
Story book, colored paper, scissors, crayons, markers, glue, glitter, if possible, dice, game pieces or buttons or pebbles, toothpicks, plastic cups.

TIME NEEDED
15-25 minutes.

HOW TO

1. Read a story book about animals, and do brainstorming for a game your child might invent to go with it. What would be needed for a board game? For example, "The Three Pigs" would need three pigs and three houses with steps to take between houses for the wolf.

2. Ask your child to make a rough draft of the game.

3. Now he or she can design and make the game.

4. Play the game.

5. Make adjustments.

6. Replay the game.

7. Ask your child to dictate the directions for the game to you or write them out, so they do not get forgotten.

EVALUATION
Does your child enjoy playing the game?

EASIER AND HARDER IDEAS

1. A younger child can invent a game with only two characters (for example, "Mary had a Little Lamb" game).

2. An older child can do a more elaborate games such as "Magellan Sailing Around the World." Look up the facts in an encyclopedia or on CDROM.

Home Learning Enabler
Second Grade
Science
Thinking Skills: Sequencing

#3 Molecules in a Chain

REASON
To understand that molecules make up all things around us, and they are created in a chain of different shapes strung together in a certain sequence.

MATERIALS
Rigatoni macaroni, wooden beads or paper rings or paper cutouts, string with tape around the ends, and a picture book about molecules if possible.

TIME NEEDED
5-10 minutes.

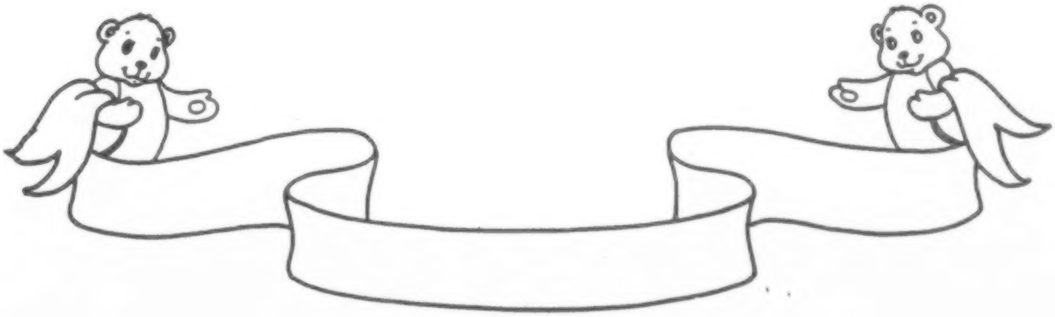
HOW TO

1. Talk about molecules having a sequence such as two beads, three rigatoni, one paper cutout. A picture book on the subject from the library will help.
2. String a sequence of beads, rigatoni and paper cutouts with a hole in the center. Ask your child to make a copy of your chain.
3. Now ask your child to make a sequence for you to copy.
4. See how complex the chains can become.

EVALUATION
Does your child make a sequence that nearly matches?

EASIER AND HARDER IDEAS

1. A younger child can string the rigatoni for a necklace.
2. An older child can look up DNA and copy a part of it on a wire that can be curved in a spiral. Look up DNA in an encyclopedia or on CDROM.



Home Learning Enabler
Second Grade
Reading
Writing
Thinking Skills: Planning
Organizing

#14 Grocery List Dictation

REASON
To practice reading and writing words about food.

MATERIALS
Paper and pencil.

TIME NEEDED
5-10 minutes.

HOW TO

1. Talk about an important family dinner that may be coming up soon: a birthday, a special holiday or even your child's friend coming as a guest.
2. Talk about food you and your child would like to have and get out some of the recipes.
3. Take turns dictating what foods will need to be purchased at the grocery store and write the grocery list.
4. Ask your child to copy over one or more of the recipes, if it is short, and a food he or she likes.
5. Go to the store with your child to purchase the food.
6. Let your child help prepare one or more of the foods for the dinner.

EVALUATION
Did your child write some of the foods on the grocery list correctly?

EASIER AND HARDER IDEAS

1. A younger child can cut out pictures of the foods he or she would like and paste them on cardboard for a "grocery list".
2. An older child can look up the five food groups and see how the list items fit into the food groups.

Home Learning Enabler
Second Grade
Reading
Social Studies
Thinking Skills: Categorizing
Observing

#5 Multi-Cultural Foods in Food Groups

REASON
To understand more about other countries and their foods to gain practice in sorting foods into the five food groups.

MATERIALS
Pictures or drawings of food from other countries.

TIME NEEDED
5-10 minutes.

HOW TO

1. Talk about the five food groups and make a chart with your child with a picture in each box:

   Meat and Protein
   Milk/Cheese/Dairy
   Vegetables
   Fruit
   Grains and Cereals

2. Now talk about foods people eat in other lands. We eat many of these foods also. What food group would tacos or spaghetti fall in?

3. Look for pictures of other country foods. Cut them out and place them on the chart in a food group. Check to see if it is the right group.

4. Ask a child from another country more about the food they eat. Let your child play the "Food Group Game" on the chart together with this friend.

EVALUATION
Does your child understand more about the five food groups?

EASIER AND HARDER IDEAS

1. A younger child can notice different clothes children wear in other countries in a picture book.

2. An older child can look up recipes for ethnic dishes and cook one or two of them.

SAMPLE PARENT LETTER/FEEDBACK SHEET

____
(Date)

Dear Parent:

Did you know you are your child's most important teacher? Would you take __5__ minutes this week and do this activity with your chld? Please tear off the sheet below with your ideas and comments and sent it back to school.

Thank you

____
(Teacher's name)

(Tear Off)

FEEDBACK SHEET

For: ________________
(Child's name)

1. Did you or someone else do the activity with the child? YES_____NO_____

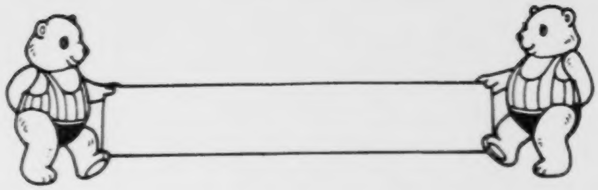
- -

If YES,

2. How many times did you do the activity? Once_____ More than Once _____
3. How much time did the activity take? 0 —— 15 mins. —— more than 30 mins.
4. Did you enjoy this activity with your child? YES_____NO_____
5. Do you feel your child understood it? YES_____NO_____
6. Do you feel your child needs more help in this area? YES_____NO_____
7. Please share any adaptation you may have of this activity, or describe a new activity you would suggest. (Write on the back, if necessary) Thanks for cooperating!

________________ Signature

________________ Teacher's name



#1 CUT UP WORDS

REASON

To practice reading skills.

MATERIALS NEEDED

Old magazines or newspapers, scissors, paper, tape, glue, or paste.

PARENT'S TIME NEEDED

5 minutes

HOW TO DO

1. The child cuts out all the words that he or she knows.
2. Start with short words and move up to longer words.
3. When the child has collected 10 to 20 words, make a sentence. Tape or glue it to paper.
4. Cut out more words and try to make a story. Cut out pictures to go with it.
5. This makes a good present for a younger child or a sick child.

AGE OF CHILD

8 to 13

HOW TO TELL IF IT WORKED

Does the child cut out longer words after one or two weeks?

EASIER AND HARDER IDEAS

1. A younger child can circle the words he or she knows with a marker.
2. Make a matching game with cut out words on top of magazine or newspaper words.

#2 CIRCLE THE DOLLAR

REASON

To practice number recognition skills.

MATERIALS NEEDED

Cash register receipts, pencil.

PARENT'S TIME NEEDED

5 to 10 minutes

HOW TO DO

1. Give your child the receipt from the family food shopping.
2. Ask him or her to circle everything that cost more than $1.00.
3. Ask your child to put a "J" by all the items on the list that were "Junk food." Is this half? One fourth? What is the total number of junk foods?
4. Ask him or her to mark a "V" by vegetables an "M" for meats. Mark a "D" for dairy.
5. Add up the cost of each category; junk food, meat, vegetable, dairy. Which cost more?

AGE OF CHILD

8 to 13

HOW TO TELL IF IT WORKED

Does the child get some of the numbers correct?

EASIER AND HARDER IDEAS

1. Circle amounts for less than $1.00 in the food ads in the newspaper.
2. An older child can figure the percent of the total receipt for each category: junk food, meat, dairy and vegetables.

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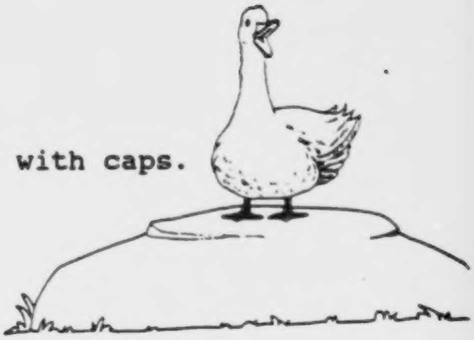
#3 DESERT ISLAND NOTES

REASON

To practice writing skills.



MATERIALS NEEDED

Paper, pencils, different sized bottles with caps.

PARENT'S TIME NEEDED

5 to 10 minutes

HOW TO DO

1. Ask your child to pretend he or she is on a desert island. The only way to talk to you is to write a note and float it in a bottle. Talk about desert islands.
2. Ask your child to write notes to you and put each of them into one of the bottles.
3. Float the bottles in the bathtub or the kitchen sink.
4. Write a message and send it back to your child.
5. Look on a map to see where islands are that have water all around them.

AGE OF CHILD

8 to 11

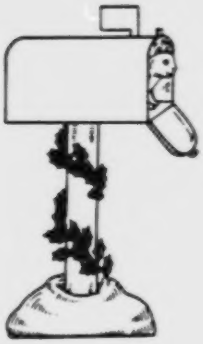
HOW TO TELL IF IT WORKED

How long are your child's messages?

EASIER AND HARDER IDEAS

1. A younger child could read more printed messages from you.
2. An older child could write you pages from his or her "desert diary."

#4 Secret Santa All Year Long



Reason

To practice reading and writing skills.

Materials Needed

Pieces of paper, pencil.

PARENTS TIME NEEDED

5 minutes

HOW TO DO

1. Once a day child writes a nice note to someone in the family, or the child does a favor for someone and leaves a note saying "from your secret helper."
2. Notes can be compliments: "You look great" or promises "I will make your bed".
3. At the end of the week or the end of the month the secret helper tells his or her name. He or she might pick just one person to help for next month.
4. Mom and Dad can leave notes for the helper, too.

AGE OF CHILD

8 - 10

HOW TO TELL IF IT WORKED

Does the child write several notes?

EASIER AND HARDER IDEAS

1. A younger child can write the word "SECRET" on his or her notes and leave them.
2. An older child can offer more help such as grocery shopping or baby sitting.

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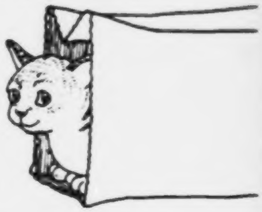
#5 Playing Store At Home

REASON

To learn about money and practice reading and math.

MATERIALS NEEDED

Cans and food packages from the kitchen cupboard, play money (can be made from paper).



PARENT'S TIME NEEDED

10 minutes

HOW TO DO

1. Ask you child if he or she would like to play store. Get out the groceries and help set up the store.
2. Help your child write prices on pieces of paper in front of each item.
3. Use play money from a game, or help you child make 1¢, 10¢, 50¢ and $1.00 pieces of paper to use.
4. Your child can be customer and storekeeper. First he or she shops (puts food in a bag). Then he or she is store keeper and adds up the bill for payment.

AGE OF CHILD

6 - 10

HOW TO TELL IF IT WORKED

Does the child add up the bill correctly? Can the child read the package names?

EASIER AND HARDER IDEAS

1. A younger child can use 1¢, 5¢ and 10¢ play money. Price food to match.
2. An older child can use much more elaborate pricing and more expensive food.

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#6 Shopping For Grandmother

REASON

To practice filling out an order form and adding up the total.

MATERIALS NEEDED

Clothing mail order catalog, paper, pencil

PARENT'S TIME NEEDED

5 - 10 minutes

HOW TO DO

1. Talk to your child about making up an order for grandmother (or another relative).
2. Plan a low budget and a high budget. Ask your child to select items that fit within the low budget.
3. Make selections that fit within the high budget. How many items are there?
4. Add up the totals including mailing costs and taxes.

AGE OF CHILD

8 - 10

HOW TO TELL IF IT WORKED

Does the child fill out the blank correctly? Does the total fit the budget?

EASIER AND HARDER IDEAS

1. A younger child could cut out the pictures for his or her order.
2. An older child can plan several orders. Two for the most items possible within the low or the high budget, two for the least items possible within the low and the high budgets.

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#7 Tell Me Five Reasons Why

REASON

To practice giving supporting reasons for a request.

MATERIALS NEEDED

Television schedule

PARENT'S TIME NEEDED

5 - 10 minutes

HOW TO DO

1. Wait until your child asks to watch a certain T. V. show.
2. Ask him or her to give you five reasons why he or she wants to watch it.
3. If the reasons are good and you approve of the show, turn on the set. If the reasons are good, but you disapprove of the show, allow only five minutes of it.
4. Ask your child to "grade" TV shows he or she watches as in school: A, B, C, D, F. Tell the reasons why for each grade.

AGE OF CHILD

6 - 16

HOW TO TELL IF IT WORKED

Does your child get better at giving reasons? What they see, what people or animals do, other details?

EASIER AND HARDER IDEAS

1. A younger child can give three reasons they liked a show when it is over.
2. An older child can do a chart of the programs he or she wants to watch for a week. Use the T. V. schedule.

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#8 Trip Across the United States

REASON

To learn to plan a trip and read the map.

MATERIALS NEEDED

Map of the United States and a marker. If possible, post the map near the meal table.

HOW TO DO

1. Decide where you and the child would like to go.
2. Mark the location on the map. Then start drawing lines on the map for how you would get there. A long trip might take several days.
3. Talk about the cities in which you would stop.
4. On other days talk about each city. What would you and your child like to see there? Look up some fact about the city.
5. Let your child add up the total miles from the trip.

AGE OF CHILD

7 - 12

HOW TO TELL IF IT WORKED

Can your child locate the cities on the map?

EASIER AND HARDER IDEAS

1. A younger child can plan a trip on a county or state map.
2. An older child might enjoy getting travel folders of the different cities and learning about the sights to see. Look up the cities in a reference book or encyclopedia.

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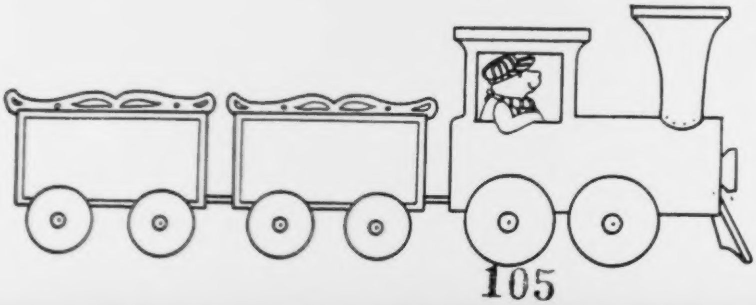

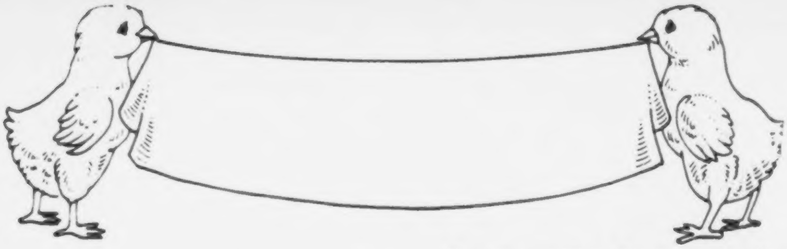

#9 Puzzle Paragraphs

REASONS

To practice reading and matching skills

MATERIALS NEEDED

A magazine or newspaper to cut up, scissors, heavy paper, marker

PARENT'S TIME NEEDED

5 - 10 minutes

HOW TO DO

1. Select two or three paragraphs in articles or magazines that are interesting. One is for each puzzle.
2. Ask your child to glue them on the heavy pieces of paper or on paper plates.
3. Draw a "wavy" line down the middle of the paragraph.
4. Ask your child to cut the puzzle in two down the line.
5. Now see if he or she can match up the paragraph and read it.

AGE OF CHILD

8 - 9

HOW TO TELL IF IT WORKED

Can the child match the puzzle pieces? This is good for a sick child's activity.

EASIER AND HARDER IDEAS

1. A young child could cut out pictures and glue them to make puzzles.
2. An older child could use a longer article or several paragraphs.

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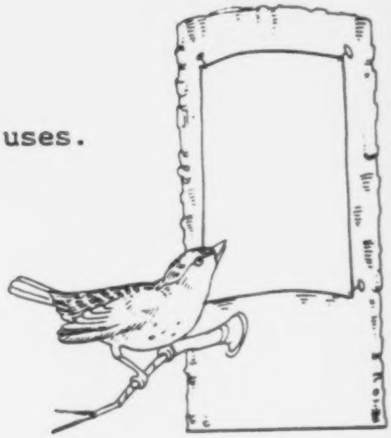
#10 List The Verbs



REASON

To increase the number of verbs your child uses.

MATERIALS NEEDED

TV set, paper, pencil

PARENT'S TIME NEEDED

5 - 10 minutes

HOW TO DO

1. While your child is watching T. V., ask him or her to list the action words (verbs) that he or she hears.
2. Later try using one or two of the new verbs in a sentence.
3. Another day, do the same with adjectives. Commercials have a lot of adjectives.
4. Use the adjectives in talking. Make sentences with them and verbs.
5. Put the list of verbs and adjectives next to each other. See how many your child can use together.

AGE OF CHILD

8 - 13

HOW TO TELL IF IT WORKED

Does your child hear some new words to write down?

EASIER AND HARDER IDEAS

1. A younger child can write down only three words.
2. An older child can list nouns also. Put the three lists together and see how many sentences he or she can make.

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SAMPLE PARENT LETTER/FEEDBACK SHEET

____
(Date)

Dear Parent:

Did you know you are your child's most important teacher? Would you take __5__ minutes this week and do this activity with your chld? Please tear off the sheet below with your ideas and comments and sent it back to school.

Thank you

____
(Teacher's name)

(Tear Off)

FEEDBACK SHEET

For: _______________
(Child's name)

1. Did you or someone else do the activity with the child? YES_____ NO_____

- -

If YES,

2. How many times did you do the activity? Once_____ More than Once _____

3. How much time did the activity take?
----
0 15 mins. more than 30 mins.

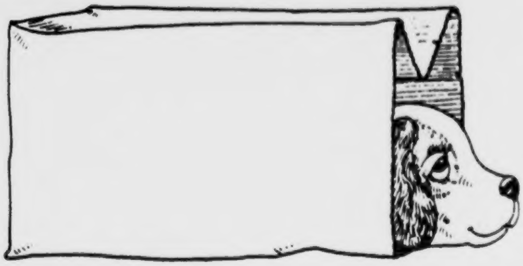
4. Did you enjoy this activity with your child? YES_____ NO_____

5. Do you feel your child understood it? YES_____ NO_____

6. Do you feel your child needs more help in this area? YES_____ NO_____

7. Please share any adaptation you may have of this activity, or describe a new activity you would suggest. (Write on the back, if necessary) Thanks for cooperating!

_______________ _______________
Signature Teacher's name



#1 COUPON FILE

REASON

To practice math, to practice comparing.

MATERIALS NEEDED

Coupons for products from the mail from newspapers, and magazines. Ten or 12 envelopes.

PARENT'S TIME NEEDED

5 to 10 minutes

HOW TO DO

1. Plan for the child to keep a coupon file for the family.
2. Label envelopes by categories of foods or products the family buys. Examples are: cereal, soup, paper goods, pet food, and so on.
3. Ask the child to sort the coupons into the envelopes. Keep them in a shoe box.
4. Ask the child to read the coupons in one envelope carefully. Mark the expiration date. Compare the money saved. What is the total for that envelope? Do this for the other envelopes.

AGE OF CHILD

10 to adult

HOW TO TELL IF IT WORKED

Can the child select two or three coupons the family could use?

EASIER AND HARDER IDEAS

1. Make "pretend coupons" for a younger child. Use them in playing store.
2. Let the child go with you to the grocery store and give the coupons to the cashier. Share the money saved with the child.

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#2 RECIPES ON PACKAGES

REASON

To read and understand directions. To understand math measurements.

MATERIALS NEEDED

Packaged food, frozen food, canned food.

PARENT'S TIME NEEDED

10 to 15 minutes

HOW TO DO

1. Look over the groceries in the home and see which ones have recipes on them.
2. See which ones have nutrition labeling on them.
3. Talk about the abbreviations and what they mean.
4. Select a recipe the child would like to make. Plan to make it at that time or later for a meal.
5. After the package is used, cut off the recipe and tape or staple it to a card. This can begin a recipe file.

AGE OF CHILD

8 to adult

HOW TO TELL IF IT WORKED

Does the child understand one recipe well enough to make it?

EASIER AND HARDER IDEAS

1. Look for abbreviations. Say what they mean.
2. Compare nutrients on similar foods from their nutrition labels.

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#3 CAR SURVEY

REASON

To make a chart. To practice comparing.

MATERIALS NEEDED

Paper and pencil, cars parked in a parking lot, on the street, or seen on a ride.

PARENT'S TIME NEEDED

5 to 10 minutes

HOW TO DO

1. ASk child to make a chart with things to compare about cars across the top. Color, style, four doors or two doors, types (Stationwagon? Convertible?) and maker are some ideas.
2. Number the cars seen, down the side of the chart.
3. Child walks around or watches out the window. See how many features he or she can write on the chart.
4. Parent can walk around or look out the window to check the chart.
5. Talk about which features the child likes best.

AGE OF CHILD

9 to adult

HOW TO TELL IF IT WORKED

Does the child get some of the car features correctly written?

EASIER AND HARDER IDEAS

1. Compare trucks seen on a trip or in a parking lot. Make a chart.
2. Compare car features listed in car brochures from a dealership.

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#4 GEOMETRY AT HOME

To practice recognizing geometric shapes.

MATERIALS NEEDED

Household items: tables, boxes, pictures, anything square or round.

PARENT'S TIME NEEDED

5 to 10 minutes

HOW TO DO

1. Talk about the shapes you will try to find in the home: rectangle, triangle, square, circle, trapezoid, pentagon (5 sides), hexagon (6 sides), octagon (8 sides).
2. Look for items in these shapes, food containers are a good place to start.
3. Time the "shape hunt" to make it like a game, if you want.
4. Write down all the shapes you find and name then.

AGE OF CHILD

8 to 12

HOW TO TELL IF IT WORKED

Can the child name the shapes correctly?

EASIER AND HARDER IDEAS

1. Look for shapes in the outside world. What is a stop sign?
2. Make shapes with toothpicks. Use 5, 6, 7 and 8 name the shapes.

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#5 THE ONE BOOK

REASON

To find information in the telephone book.

MATERIALS NEEDED

Telephone book with yellow pages, pencil, paper.

PARENT'S TIME NEEDED

10 to 15 minutes

HOW TO DO

1. Parent and child select one or more items to rent or buy.
2. Look in the yellow pages under the categories for the items.
3. For each item make a list of 2 or 3 stores, their phone numbers and their addresses. Ideas include cars, T.V. sets, sewing machines and other applicances.
4. For one item call up. Compare the prices for renting and buying the item.

AGE OF CHILD

10 to adult

HOW TO TELL IF IT WORKED

Can the child find information that can be used?

EASIER AND HARDER IDEAS

1. Look up friends or neighbor's listings in the white pages.
2. Find stores for an item the family plans to buy.

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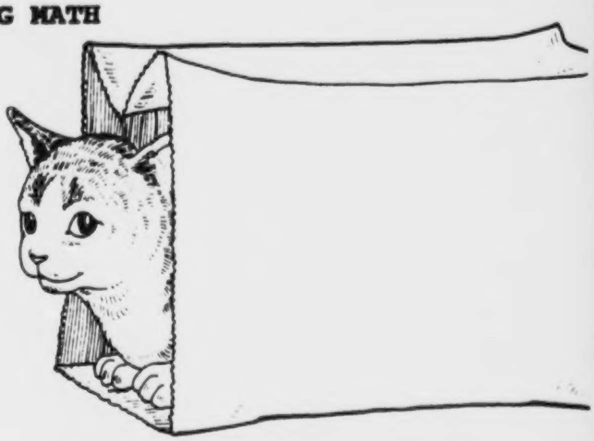
#6 PAPER BAG MATH



REASON

To practice measuring skills.

MATERIALS NEEDED -

Large paper bag.

PARENT'S TIME NEEDED

5 to 10 minutes

HOW TO DO

1. Ask your child to gather any empty packages, containers, or measuring tools, in the home that are marked with their size. Gallon plastic bottles, pint refrigerator boxes, ruler, tape measure, yard stick, measuring spoons or cups are some ideas.

2. Check the measurement sizes. Are their 2 cups in the pint? 16 cups in the gallon? 4 tablespoons in 1/4 cup? 16 tablespoons in a cup? Note any errors in the markings.

3. Compare 2 containers the same size to see if they hold the same amount. Compare two different containers.

AGE OF CHILD

7 to adult

HOW TO TELL IF IT WORKED

Can the child do this correctly, at least some of the time?

EASIER AND HARDER IDEAS

1. A younger child can check to see if a flat dish and a tall dish hold the same amount of water.

2. Mark the side of a plastic milk bottle to be your own private measuring scoop.

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#7 PETS FOR SALE

REASON

To improve reading skills.

MATERIALS NEEDED

Classified advertising from the newspaper pet section, paper, pencil.

PARENT'S TIME NEEDED

10 to 15 minutes

HOW TO DO

1. Look up the "Pets and Animals" section in the newspaper ads.
2. Select a pet to buy or look at. List prices and locations where this kind of animal is available.
3. Narrow down the search. What kind of dog or cat? How far would you have to go?
4. List the"best buys" in this day's advertising. Tell why they are best buys.
5. Mark the locations where they are for sale on a map.

AGE OF CHILD

9 to 14

HOW TO TELL IF IT WORKED

Can your child find four or five animal ads?

EASIER AND HARDER IDEAS

1. What kind of pets are most often for sale? Least often?
2. Write an ad for your own pet. What would you say? Charge $1,000,000.00 or more if you like.

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#8 MAPPING SPORTS

REASON

To build an understanding of United States geography.

MATERIALS NEEDED

United States map, pins, newspaper sports section(s), colored marker.

PARENT'S TIME NEEDED

5 to 10 minutes

HOW TO DO

1. With the colored marker, underline cities in whichplayers in the sports section are playing, or are their home towns.
2. When four or five cities are identified, put up the United States map. Put pins in the cities underlined or mark them.
3. Talk about where the players are from. Where did they play? How far did they have to travel? How far would the student travel if he or she attended this event?
4. Find five or ten more cities. Mark them on the map and discuss them.

AGE OF CHILD

9 to 15

HOW TO TELL IF IT WORKED

Did the child mark the map correctly?

EASIER AND HARDER IDEAS

1. A younger child could mark the map for cities where friends or relatives lived.
2. An older child could keep track of sports statistics.

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#9 BUDGET THE MENU

REASON

To help your child understand costs of foods. To practice math skills.

MATERIALS NEEDED

Newspaper food ads, paper, pencil, cash register receipts.

PARENT'S TIME NEEDED

5 to 10 minutes

HOW TO DO

1. List the food you will have for dinner. (The menu).
2. Look up prices for these food in the ads, or look on the packages. Some cash register receipts list the food item with its price, also. Write down the prices.
3. Figure the cost of this meal by adding up the prices. If only half of a package is used, use only half the price.
4. Reverse this. Select an amount to spend for dinner and list foods to use. Put down their prices and the total.

AGE OF CHILD

9 to 14

HOW TO TELL IF IT WORKED

Did the child add up the prices correctly?

EASIER AND HARDER IDEAS

1. A younger child can figure a budget for what he or she wants to spend at a dime store.
2. An older child can do a clothes budget. This can be for clothes already in the closet or for new ones.

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#10 CLEANING UP THE ENVIRONMENT BEGINS AT HOME

REASON

To build an interest in protecting the environment. To practice math skills.

MATERIALS NEEDED

Yard stick, trash bags, markers.

PARENT'S TIME NEEDED

5 to 10 minutes

HOW TO DO

1. Set up boxes marked for glass bottles, aluminum cans and other trash. Line each box with a trash bag.
2. Ask the family to separate their trash by these categories.
3. At the end of the week, measure each collection of trash with the yard stick and record. Bags of trash can also be weighed on a scale before putting out for removal.
4. Keep track of size and weight for 2 or 3 weeks. See which category is usually the biggest in size and in weight.

AGE OF CHILD

9 to 17

HOW TO TELL IF IT WORKED

Did the child have reasonably consistent results?

EASIER AND HARDER IDEAS

1. Talk about how the family could create less trash.
2. Visit your closest re-cycling location. Talk about what you learn.

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SAMPLE PARENT LETTER/FEEDBACK SHEET

____
(Date)

Dear Parent:

Did you know you are your child's most important teacher? Would you take 5 minutes this week and do this activity with your chld? Please tear off the sheet below with your ideas and comments and sent it back to school.

Thank you

____
(Teacher's name)

(Tear Off)

FEEDBACK SHEET

For: ______________
(Child's name)

1. Did you or someone else do the activity with the child? YES_____ NO_____

- -

If YES,

2. How many times did you do the activity? Once_____ More than Once _____

3. How much time did the activity take? 0 15 mins. more than 30 mins.

4. Did you enjoy this activity with your child? YES_____ NO_____

5. Do you feel your child understood it? YES_____ NO_____

6. Do you feel your child needs more help in this area? YES_____ NO_____

7. Please share any adaptation you may have of this activity, or describe a new activity you would suggest. (Write on the back, if necessary) Thanks for cooperating!

______________________ Signature

______________________ Teacher's name

Junior High/Enablers
Middle School
Geography/Math

1. MAP YOUR PLAN (OR TAKE MOM ON A TRIP)

To help students use geography and math for a real plan.

WHAT YOU NEED

Maps, travel brochures, travel schedules.

PARENT'S TIME NEEDED

5 - 10 minutes to gather materials.

WHAT TO DO

1. Plan where the student would like to go out of state.
2. Plan a day-by-day schedule of sight-seeing, meals and lodging.
3. Plan two budgets: one for luxury, one for economy. Find out prices from a travel agent or the brochures.
4. Figure total mileage.

AGE OF CHILD

8 though adult.

HOW TO TELL IF IT WORKED

What would the trip cost? How far is it? Would someone take the trip?

EASIER AND HARDER IDEAS

1. Plan a trip to a city in your state. Use maps and choose roads to be taken.
2. Plan trips to other states and other countries. Interview people at school who've gone on trips. Learn about the new places: Where to eat and what to see.

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2. BARGAIN HUNTING

REASON

To learn to compare prices to find the better buy.

WHAT YOU NEED

Newspaper ads for radios, appliances, furniture or other high priced items.

PARENT'S TIME

One minute to hear results.

WHAT TO DO

1. Plan an item the student would like to buy.
2. Write down prices from at least five stores.
3. Compare prices on one or two more items, if there's time: T.V.s, stereos, even cars.

AGE OF CHILD

10 to adult.

HOW TO TELL IF IT WORKED

Did the student find the lowest price? Save money? Figure how much.

EASIER AND HARDER IDEAS

1. A younger student could compare prices in three stores.
2. Call the stores and get information on other details about the item.

3. COOKING FOR FUN

REASON

To build planning and math skills. To build cooking skills.

WHAT YOU NEED

Newspaper food section or food ads, a basic foods chart, and a cookbook.

PARENT'S TIME NEEDED

5 minutes to help gather the materials.

WHAT TO DO

1. Plan together, a well balanced meal or several meals; perhaps dinners for a week.
2. Ask the student to check supplies on hand and to list what is needed at the store and their prices.
3. Look at the food ads and see if any of the needed items are on sale.
4. Cook one item that changes the food from hard to soft the most by cooking. (Or is the easiest to cook).
5. Talk about the fractions in any recipe you use.

AGE

11 to adult

HOW TO TELL IF IT WORKED

Are the menus well-balanced meals? Do they contain all 4 food groups? What do they cost?

EASIER AND HARDER IDEAS

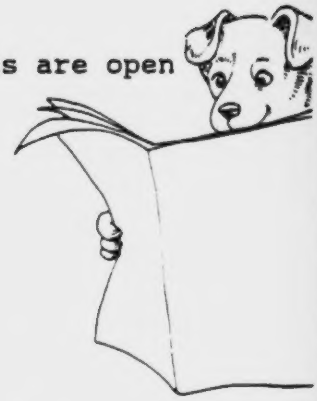
1. A younger child can add more ideas for the menus.
2. Cook a whole meal for the family.

Junior High/Enablers
Middle School
Reading

4. WHAT'S MY LINE/JOB CHOICES

REASON

To understand that many careers and job choices are open people living in the U.S.



WHAT YOU NEED

Newspapers, telephone yellow pages.

PARENT'S TIME NEEDED

10 to 15 minutes.

WHAT TO DO

1. List 15 possible jobs and careers. Don't forget small businesses one might open.
2. Look in the yellow pages and the newspaper ads for jobs that would be interesting.
3. Talk to neighbors and other adults about jobs that interest the middle schoolers the most. Pick 5 to 10 to learn about especially.

AGE OF CHILD

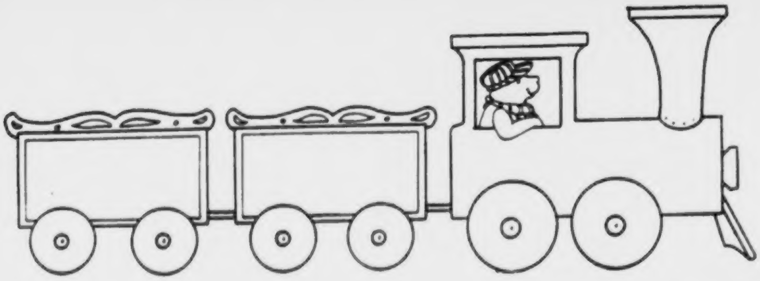
10 to adult.

HOW TO TELL IF IT WORKED

How many careers/jobs does the student learn about? Does he/she find 5 that are personally interesting?

EASIER AND HARDER

1. List jobs that one sees being done in the neighborhood or community.
2. List five jobs that are new in the last 10 years. Try to learn something about them.



5. GET THERE ON TIME

REASON

To learn to plan time and routes from transportation schedules.

WHAT YOU NEED

Bus, subway and airplane schedules and maps.

PARENT'S TIME NEEDED

5 - 10 minutes.

WHAT TO DO

1. Student selects a destination. (Perhaps the location of a job from Enabler #4).
2. Student picks the bus or subway route and travel times that would get him or her there.
3. If possible, figure the cost also, of the transportation.
4. Figure how much time it would take to get there. When would he or she have to leave to get there on time?

AGE OF CHILD

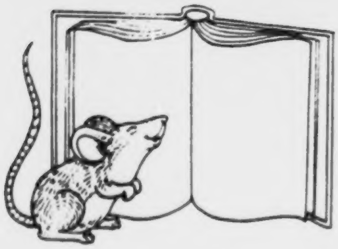
11 to adult.

HOW TO TELL IF IT WORKED

Did the middle schooler plan a workable trip? How many transfers did it need? What was the cost?

EASIER AND HARDER IDEAS

1. A younger student could find out where a local bus line goes, and plan a trip to a site on that line.
2. An older student could take the trip planned, perhaps with a friend. Plan more trips.



6. CATALOG SHOPPING

REASON

To learn to plan for the use of money. To use math skills for a personal project.

WHAT YOU NEED

Mail order catalogs from stores that sell clothing.

PARENT'S TIME NEEDED

5 to 10 minutes.

WHAT TO DO

1. Have the student imagine that he or she had just received a gift certificate for $100, $200, $300, or $400 to these stores (total).
2. Plan a new wardrobe that would fit within this amount. Try several plans for the different amounts.
3. Add up what different categories cost: Underwear? Shoes? Dressy clothes? Sportswear? Coats?
4. Write down details of choices: size, color, price and weight if the store requires it.

HOW TO TELL IF IT WORKED

Can the student stay within the limit?

EASIER AND HARDER IDEAS

1. A younger student could shop with a toy catalog and a $100 certificate.
2. An older student could equip a kitchen from an all purpose catalog. Or they could select books or jewelry from a specialty catalog.

7. WANT ADS

REASON

To learn to read for job opportunities.

WHAT YOU NEED

Sunday newspaper employment section.

PARENT'S TIME NEEDED

5 to 10 minutes.

WHAT TO DO

1. Find the "Table of Contents" for the classified advertising section.
2. Select the parts to read and find the page numbers.
3. Circle the jobs that look interesting with a colored pen or marker.
4. Write down the salaries of different jobs. What background do they require? How does one get that background?

AGE OF CHILD

11 to adult.

HOW TO TELL IF IT WORKED

Does the student circle at least three jobs? What are the qualifications?

EASIER AND HARDER IDEAS

1. A younger child could look at the food ads and circle three things he or she would like to buy.
2. Look for apartments or houses to rent and circle three. Figure out where they are on a map.

8. FAMILY ECONOMICS

REASON

To learn to plan the use of money for a household.

WHAT YOU NEED

Paper, pencil, budget booklet if available.

PARENTS TIME NEEDED

10 to 15 minutes.

WHAT TO DO

1. List the family income available after taxes and deductions are taken out.
2. List the household expenses. Fixed expenses would be rent or mortgage, car payments loan payments. Variable expenses would be food costs, utility bills, clothing costs, car costs, recreation costs and miscellaneous costs.
3. Discuss how much is left for unexpected emergencies, donations or allowances.
4. Discuss saving towards a trip, vacation and towards an emergency fund.

AGE OF ADULT

11 to adult

HOW TO TELL IF IT WORKED

Does the student understand why "money seems tight"?

EASIER AND HARDER IDEAS

1. A younger student can plan his or her allowance for the month.
2. An older student can plan a budget for themselves for when they are living on their own including all these categories.

9. MY CHECKING ACCOUNT

REASON

To learn how bank accounts work.

WHAT YOU NEED

Bank statements, checks.

PARENT'S TIME NEED

15 to 20 minutes

WHAT TO DO

1. Discuss with your child that he or she will probably have a checking account at age 18. (Banks prefer this age, as their signature has stopped varying).
2. Show the bank statement and discuss the types of listings on it.
3. Show your check book. Allow the student to write a few of the checks for bills this month, with your signature. Demonstrate the correct way to write in the dollar amounts.
4. Allow your child to record these 3 or 4 checks in your check register and do the subtraction.

AGE OF CHILD

11 through adult.

HOW TO TELL IF IT WORKED

Does the student write the check correctly? Does he or she understand the bank statement, somewhat?

EASIER AND HARDER

1. Allow a younger child to stack up the bills for this month. Let him or her put away the paid bills.
2. Let an older child balance the bank statement. Double check the figures, but this is good math practice. (See Enabler #12).

10. LOANS FOR CARS

REASON

To understand that one can "shop" for loans from banks or other institutions.

WHAT YOU NEED

Loan ads from newspapers, brochures from banks.

PARENT'S TIME NEEDED

10 to 15 minutes

WHAT TO DO

1. Explain the percent of interest concept.
2. Talk about how much 10% of interest would be on different amounts.
3. Look at the loan ads and figure out the amount of interest mentioned for $1,000. Compare these numbers.
4. Now look at car loan brochures from banks. Figure the interest on $10,000. Look at how long the loan is for, and what difference that makes.
5. Discuss the most favorable loan offer found. What's the total dollar amount of interest?

HOW TO TELL IF IT WORKED

Does the student see the value in comparing loans? Do they see that 10% is really one tenth of the price, more?

EASIER AND HARDER IDEAS

1. Talk about one percent interest on a loan within the family.
2. An older child can compare different mortgage interest rates on the same priced house.

11. FIRE DEPARTMENT VOLUNTEER

REASON

To practice mapping. To understand home fire safety.

WHAT YOU NEED

Paper, pencil, ruler, colored markers.

PARENT'S TIME NEEDED

5 to 10 minutes.

HOW TO DO

1. Student draws a floor plan of the house or apartment.
2. Mark doors and windows.
3. Discuss the way out, in case of fire. Do this for each room.
4. Talk about ways to get down to ground level in an apartment or two floor house.
5. Draw dotted lines on the floor plan with a colored marker to show "fire exit"paths.

AGE OF CHILD

9 to adult.

HOW TO TELL IF IT WORKED

Post the map on the refrigerator door. Do people think it would work?

EASIER AND HARDER IDEAS

1. Make copies of the map for each room in the house.
2. Go to the Fire Department and talk to them about your map. Write in their suggestions.
3. Make a "Fire Map" for houses of relatives.

12. BALANCING A BANK STATEMENT

REASON

To understand actual uses of math.

MATERIALS NEEDED

Bank Statement, paper, pencil, calculator.

PARENT'S TIME NEEDED

15 to 20 minutes

HOW TO DO

1. Show your student the bank statement.
2. Talk about the back of the statement where there is (usually) a chart to help with balancing the statement.
3. Review the list of check numbers received by the bank. Mark and record outstanding checks. Total their amounts.
4. Now, fill in the chart, add totals for deposits and outstanding checks.
5. See if the balance matches the check book balance. (After service charges are deducted).

AGE OF CHILD

12 to adult.

HOW TO TELL IF IT WORKED

Can the student do the math to fill in the chart? Does the student's math agree with yours?

EASIER AND HARDER IDEAS

1. Help the student to open a savings account of his or her own for regular use.
2. If student is old enough, open a checking account also.
3. If statement balance above does not match the checkbook balance, have the student help research why not and correct the problem.

SAMPLE PARENT LETTER/FEEDBACK SHEET

____
(Date)

Dear Parent:

Did you know you are your child's most important teacher? Would you take __5__ minutes this week and do this ______________ activity with your chld? Please tear off the sheet below with your ideas and comments and sent it back to school.

Thank you

____
(Teacher's name)

(Tear Off)

FEEDBACK SHEET

For: ______________
(Child's name)

1. Did you or someone else do the activity with the child? YES_____ NO_____

If YES,

2. How many times did you do the activity? Once_____ More than Once _____
3. How much time did the activity take? 0 ---- 15 mins. ---- more than 30 mins.
4. Did you enjoy this activity with your child? YES_____ NO_____
5. Do you feel your child understood it? YES_____ NO_____
6. Do you feel your child needs more help in this area? YES_____ NO_____
7. Please share any adaptation you may have of this activity, or describe a new activity you would suggest. (Write on the back, if necessary) Thanks for cooperating!

______________ Signature

______________ Teacher's name

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____
(Date)

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FEEDBACK SHEET

For: ________________
(Child's name)

1. Did you or someone else do the activity with the child? YES_____ NO_____

- -

If YES,

2. How many times did you do the activity? Once_____ More than Once _____
3. How much time did the activity take? ________________________ 0 15 mins. more than 30 mins.
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6. Do you feel your child needs more help in this area? YES_____ NO_____
7. Please share any adaptation you may have of this activity, or describe a new activity you would suggest. (Write on the back, if necessary) Thanks for cooperating!

________________ ________________
Signature Teacher's name

HELPING AMERICAN TEACHERS
PERFORM BETTER IN THE CLASSROOM:
RESEARCH FINDINGS INTO PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS

Home Learning Enablers
Grades 1–9
Reading/Geography
History

Education, Continuing Education, and Administration
1370 Canterbury Way
Rockville, MD 20854

HISTORY STORIES

REASON

To help your child learn about sequence, what comes before or after something else.

WHAT YOU NEED

Nothing. This is a good activity to do in a car.

PARENT'S TIME NEEDED

5 minutes.

WHAT TO DO

1. Begin a story about something that happened in history, and ask your child to finish it.
2. Ask him to begin a story and then you complete it
3. Take turns telling parts of a story, that you think up together. Put in historical details you know about.
4. Write down your child's story or ask a visitor or family member to write it down. These are fun to read later.
5. Talk about interesting things that happened in the "old" days.

AGE OF CHILD

5, 6, 7

HOW TO TELL IF IT WORKED

Can your child complete a story you start? Does she ask to do it again?

EASIER AND HARDER IDEAS

1. Ask other family members to take turns telling a story with the two of you. Stories about family history or town history are good for this.
2. When reading a story or a picture book about history to your child, stop and ask your child to guess what happens next. Then see what did happen next in history.

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HISTORY PICTURES

REASON

To help your child talk in complete sentences.

WHAT YOU NEED

Magazine or newspaper pictures of historical scenes, objects or buildings. Scissors.

PARENT'S TIME NEEDED

10 minutes

WHAT TO DO

1. Tell your child something about the history represented in the picture. For instance, "this building was built long before grandmother lived (or other family members) Important papers were signed here."
2. Encourage your child to pick out magazine pictures of other historical events or buildings.
3. Paste these in a scrapbook. Write down the stories, and add to them later.

AGE OF CHILD

5, 6, 7

HOW TO TELL IF IT WORKED

Can she talk about the pictures? Does she ask questions about old buildings in the community?

EASIER AND HARDER IDEAS

1. Combine the magazine pictures into a story you make up. Staple the pictures together for a "book."
2. For an older child, use longer stories with more accuracy. Leave the bottom half of the page under the picture for the story. These stories can be added to as the child learns more.

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TRIP ACROSS THE UNITED STATES

REASON

To learn to plan a trip, read the map, and learn some history.

MATERIALS NEEDED

Maps of the United States and a marker. If possible, post the map near the meal table.

HOW TO DO

1. Decide where you and the child would like to go. Pick out one or two historical places on the way or at the final destination.
2. Mark the location on the map. Then start drawing lines on the map for how you would get there. A long trip might take several days.
3. Talk about the cities in which you would stop. What historical places are in each one? Check travel brochures or reference books.
4. On other days talk about each city. What would you and your child like to see there? Look up some fact about the city. What interesting historical event happened there?
5. Let your child add up the total miles from the trip.

AGE OF CHILD

7 - 12

HOW TO TELL IF IT WORKED

Can your child locate the cities on the map? Can he or she tell about one historical event?

EASIER AND HARDER IDEAS

1. A younger child can plan a trip on a county or state map.
2. An older child might enjoy getting travel folders of the different cities and learning about the sights to see. Look up the cities in a reference book or encyclopedia.

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The World As A Cherry Tomato

Reason

To understand that days are related to the earth's turning on its center. This is called its axis.

What You Need

A cherry tomato, a toothpick, a ballpoint pen or marker and a lamp.

Parent's Time Needed

5 minutes

How to Do It

1. Talk about the earth turning in one complete circle each day.
2. Stick a toothpick through the tomato center, from top to bottom. Turn the tomato around the toothpick. The toothpick is like the imaginary line through the center of the earth called the axis.
3. Put an 'x' on the tomato with the pen or marker for where you are on the world.
4. Rotate the tomato in front of the lamp. When the light is shining on the 'x' it is day. When it is not, it is night. The earth takes 24 hours to spin around its axis once. That is why our day is 24 hours long.

Age of Child

8-10 years

How to Tell If It Worked

Does the child understand that the earth's turning is what causes the sun to "go down" and "come up"?

Easier and Harder Ideas

1. A younger child could do this with a larger fruit, turning it in front of the lamp: a grapefruit, orange or apple, with no toothpick.
2. An older child could tip the axis to make longer and shorter days for summer and winter.

Photo Opportunity

Take a picture of this activity and show it to friends or family

Two Halves Of An Orange

Reason

To understand that the equator is an imaginary line around the earth. This divides the northern hemisphere and the southern hemisphere.

What You Need

An orange, a knife, and a world map or globe.

Parent's Time Needed

5 minutes

How to Do It

1. Explain that the world is a ball, like an orange. If you have a globe, talk about it.
2. Draw a line around the middle of the orange and talk about the equator. The equator areas of the earth receive the most sun and are the hottest.
3. Cut the orange in two along the line. Each half is called a hemisphere, which means "half" "ball". The half of the orange or world above the equator is called the northern hemisphere. The half below the equator os called the southern hemisphere. Point to these on a map.
4. Eat the orange.

Age of Child

8-9 years

How to Tell If It Worked

Does you child understand that northern and southern hemispheres simply refer to the top half and the bottom half of the ball?

Easier and Harder Ideas

1. A younger child can find other round objects to draw a line around for an equator: a ball, a grapefruit, or a ball of clay.
2. An older child can cut an orange in half from top to bottom and look up the eastern and western hemispheres on a globe or world map.

Photo Opportunity

Take a picture of this activity and show it to friends or family

Latitude And Longitude

Reason

To understand that lines of longitude run north and south on the earth. Lines of latitude run east and west.

What You Need

A cantalope, a marker, a globe or world map.

Parent's Time Needed

5-10 minutes

How to Do It

1. Talk about the imaginary lines on the earth that run north and south like the lines on a cantalope. These lines are called longitude which means "longness".
2. Talk about an east and west set of lines that run sideways on the earth and are called latitude. Draw some in with the marker. Latitude means "wideness".
3. Talk about these lines being used to help sailors and travelers measure their exact location on the earth. Find some locations on the map by their latitude and longitude.
4. Eat a piece of cantalope.

Age of Child

8-11 years

How to Tell If It Worked

Does your child understand that these are imaginary lines used for measuring?

Easier and Harder Ideas

1. A younger child can find and draw the equator on the cantalope with a different color marker.
2. An older child can mark the longitude from the prime meridian on the ridge lines on the cantalope. The prime meridian can be one line you pick to be Greenwich England. This location or "starting point" was selected long ago.

Photo Opportunity

Take a picture of this activity and show it to friends or family

Planet Fruit Salad

Reason

To understand that the planet moves around the sun. Our earth is one of nine planets.

What You Need

4 grapes, 2 oranges, 2 cherries, a grapefruit, 18-20 toothpicks, and string.

Parent's Time Needed

10 minutes

How to Do It

1. Explain that the planets are different sizes and rotate around the sun. The grapefruit can be the sun in a solar system you will make.
2. Lay out the solar system explaining the order and sizes as follows (in this order):

   Mercury - grape
   Venus - grape
   Earth - grape
   Mars - grape
   Jupiter - orange
   Saturn - orange
   Uranus - cherry
   Neptune - cherry
   Pluto - grape
3. Stick a toothpick in each fruit, nine toothpicks in the grapefruit. Attach and tie longer and longer strings to each fruit planet to show that some are farther away than others in the order listed in 2. Pluto is the farthest out. Start with Mercury on a six inch string. These distances are only approximate so your solar system will fit on a table.
4. Show how each planet moves around the sun. It takes the earth 365 days to go around the sun.
5. Eat the fruit when you and your child are finished.

Age of Child

8-11 years

How to Tell If It Worked

Does the child understand that all of us on earth are riding around the sun each year?

Easier and Harder Ideas

1. A younger child can just attach earth to the sun.
2. An older child can shorten the string on the sides to make an oval as the earth goes by the sun. Talk about how this creates summer and winter when the earth is closer or farther from the sun. The earth also tilts on its axis by seasons.

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Make a Family History Scrapbook

Reason

To practice skills of organizing, understanding and empathy, guessing and hypothesizing. To know more about another time.

Materials Needed

Snapshots or pictures of cities, cars, clothes from when grandparents or parents were young. Magazine pictures.

Parent's Time Needed

10-15 minutes

How To Do It

1. Collect pictures of where parents or grandparents lived when they were young. If no photographs are available, look for a picture of the city in those years. (Such as Omaha Nebraska in the 1930's). Talk about it, try to understand what it was like.
2. Talk about cars they owned. Look for a picture of the make and year. (Such as a 1948 Hudson). Talk about it. Guess what it was like.
3. Talk about particular clothes they wore. If grandmother wore a "flapper" dress in the 1920's, look for pictures of clothes from that time.
4. Put these together in a scrapbook. Make your own by stapling sheets of paper together. Put a short story about what the picture shows on each page.

Age of Child

8-12

How to Tell If It Worked

Does your child find at least one or two pictures from other times?

Easier and Harder Ideas

1. A younger child can collect pictures from recent times to put in the scrapbook. Label them "now she looks like this." Label the people or places.
2. An older child can follow this interest with a museum trip to see more old cars or dresses from the 1920's or 1930's.

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Looking at Stamps

Reason

To think about other times and other places. To practice observing, comparing and classifying.

What You Need

A number of different stamps, old or new, from the U.S. or other countries (10-20 are good to start with).

Parent's Time Needed

5-10 minutes

How to Do It

1. Lay out the stamps and ask your child to look at them and compare them.. Color? Price? Are they all still in use? Think of more questions.
2. Talk about how much it used to cost to mail a letter. Start with 25¢, and 18¢, and go all the way back to 3¢ and the 1¢ postcard.
3. Talk about how things change and that is how history changes. Ask your child to watch for more different stamps to collect.
4. Decide on categories by which to classify the stamps, and paste them into a booklet. Any category the child chooses is fine: color, pictures, country, or other possibilities.

Age of Child

8-15

How to Tell If It Worked

Does your child watch for more stamps to add to her collection?

Easier and Harder Ideas

1. A younger child could classify buttons by size or color.
2. An older child could look up the countries of the foreign stamps. Or categorize other things: a sewing box or a tool kit.

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Antique Store Visit

Reason

To see and touch some history in historical objects. To practice observing, comparing and classifying.

What You Need

One or more antique stores to visit.

Parent's Time Needed

15-20 minutes

How to Do It

1. Visit an antique store as part of other shopping or as a special trip.
2. Ask your child to pick out five things that he would like to know about. If the item is sturdy, like furniture, let him touch it.
3. Tell your child what you know about the item. Ask the salesperson or dealer for more information.
4. Ask your child to observe the items carefully so he can draw a picture of them when he gets home.
5. Compare the items. How are they the same? How are they different? Classify the items in some way. Are they from the same century? Are they all to be used indoors? Look for these categories in another antique store later.

Age of Child

8-12

How to Tell If It Worked

Can your child draw a picture of some of the items?

Easier and Harder Ideas

1. A younger child could pick out 3 items to learn more about.
2. An older child could look up the items in a reference book. He could write a story about how the items were used, to go with the pictures.

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Grades 3-6
History, Reading
Thinking Skills

New Titles for Historical Markers

Reason

To understand roadside historical markers as a part of history. To practice reading skills and summarizing skills.

What You Need

A walking or car trip to (or past) an historical marker.

Parent's Time Needed

5-10 minutes

What To Do

1. Read the sign out loud together.
2. Talk about what it says.
3. Ask your child "what do you think the world was like then?"
4. Ask your child to summarize what the marker says. One way to do this is to ask him or her to make up a new title for what the marker says.
5. Ask your child what else might have happened then. Look it up in a reference book to check what did happen.
6. If the item the marker points out is still standing, look at it and visit it.

Age of Child

8-12

How to Tell If It Worked

Can your child tell you one or two new titles for the marker?

Easier and Harder Ideas

1. A younger child could draw pictures of what the marker describes or points out.
2. An older child could think about finding the cause and effect of what the marker says. For instance: "what caused this town to be built here?" "It was on a river they could use for transportation." What are other possibilities?

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Grades 3-6
History, Reading
Thinking Skills

Connecting Historical Markers

Reason

To understand that roadside historical markers are connected in history. To practice reading skills, guessing, and hypothesizing.

What You Need

A walking or car trip to two or more historical markers.

Parent's Time Needed

5-10 minutes for each marker.

What To Do

1. Talk about roadside signs that tell you a little more with each sign. Advertising signs on the road like those used for "Burma Shave", are an example.
2. Read each historical marker. After the second one, talk about any way it might be connected with the first one. Same century? Same state? Both are buildings or towns?
3. Ask your child to guess why something happened there. For instance: "Why did George Washington ride his horse to church?" "There were no cars or buses." What are some other answers?
4. Guess how the people felt then.

Age of Child

8-12

How To Tell If It Worked

Can your child see one way the markers connect? More than one way?

Easier and Harder Ideas

1. Play "Burma Shave Historical Markers" on a long car trip where you see several markers.
2. An older child could figure out how long it would take to do the same thing today, such as go to church by horse versus by car. Next, guess why the place or event is named as it is.

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Organizing a History Outing

Reason

To visit a museum or similar place. To give your child experience organizing an outing. To practice giving a good critique.

What You Need

A museum or historic place to visit, a picnic lunch or snack, transportation.

Parent's Time Needed

60 to 90 minutes.

How to Do It

1. Decide with your child, on a museum or other historical site to visit.
2. Ask your child to organize the outing. Plan what to take for lunch or snack and make or buy it. Write down how to get there and how long it will take. Pack the food.
3. When you arrive ask your child to choose 5 to 10 things to look at carefully. Walk around the part of the museum where these things are.
4. Later, while you eat the lunch or snack, discuss what you have seen. Can the child connect the different things in some way? Can he tell you 5 reasons he liked or did not like particular items?

Age of Child

10-12

How to Tell If It Worked

Can your child describe at least 3 of the things he has chosen?

Easier and Harder Ideas

1. A younger child can just run in and see three things on one floor, and describe them later. She can tell three reasons she liked or did not like something.
2. An older child can write a "trip diary" and include a section on his plans also.

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Maps and TV

Reason

To build historical and geographical relationships. To develop skills in comparing.

Materials Needed

A world map, a U.S. map, and a map of your town or city. Daily newspaper.

Parent's Time Needed

5-10 minutes

How to Do It

1. Put up the maps near each other, and if possible near the TV area.
2. Mark the places your child knows: your city, places he or she has visited and where friends live on all three maps. Talk about how big or small it looks on the map.
3. Look at the daily newspaper. Use movable markers to show where headline stories are taking place. Talk about how the local headlines seem much smaller on the U.S. map and the world map.
4. Mark TV news stories on the maps with a different color tack or marker.

How to Tell If It Worked

Does your child begin to look things up on the map on her own?

Easier and Harder Ideas

1. Let a younger child mark directions to a friends house on a street map.
2. Have an older child make small flag miniatures and use them for markers for the world news.

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Photo Opportunity

Take a picture of this activity and show it to friends or family

Finding and Giving Directions

Reasons

To understand that maps can tell us distance. location. size. shape. boundaries and anything else we choose to show.

Materials Needed

A road map of your area. A map of your region of the United States.

Parent's Time Needed

5-10 minutes

How to Do It

1. Talk about the directions you can give from reading a map.
2. Show your child the distance numbers on the regional map. Show mileage given near the highways and on the chart at the side, if there is one.
3. Show the north and south arrows, the key the to the scale for size and the boundaries of city, county or state.
4. Ask your child to find and give directions to a place in your area. Write them down.
5. Ask him or her to find and write down directions to a city in the next state or two states away.

Age of Child

10-15

How to Tell If It Worked

Can your child give reasonable accurate directions?

Easier and Harder Ideas

1. A younger child can glue pictures of the local sights on the local map.
2. An older child can look up old maps in the encyclopedia or the library and see what early map makers thought of the size and shape of countries.

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Camels Help the World to Grow

Reason

To understand that various kinds of transportation have helped the world to become better linked. In hot, dry climates the use of the camel helped link the Middle East with Arabia, Africa and China a long time ago.

Materials Needed

Library books showing camels and some of the countries mentioned. A world map and a marker.

Parents Time Needed

10-15 minutes

How to Do It

1. Talk about camels being wild until about 300 A.D. On a roll of shelf paper show that if the year 2,000 is 20 feet, 300 A.D. would be three feet. Or mark the year 2,000 A.D. as ten feet and 300 A.D. as 18 inches (allowing six inches per 100 years).
2. Look at pictures of camels in the picture books. A large number of them were domesticated or tamed by 300 A.D. They could then be used to ride on and to carry baggage. Find pictures of caravans of camels. Talk about the camels feet and hump and why these help a camel to cross the desert.
3. Talk about what differences this might make, now that people could cross the hot deserts. Goods showed up in new places and many peoples learned trading skills.
4. Look at pictures of the hot dry deserts in the different countries.
5. Mark these on a map.

Age of Child

10-14

How to Tell If It Worked

Can the child find some caravan pictures? Can he or she mark one or two of the countries on the map?

Easier and Harder Ideas

1. A younger child can draw pictures of camels and caravans on the time line. Go to the zoo and look at camels.
2. An older child can trace the caravan routes on the map. Then he or she can look them up in a reference book to see how correct the guesses or estimate was.

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The First Cities

Reason

To understand that cities did have a beginning, but it was a long, long time ago.

Materials Needed

Library picture books with pictures of very old Middle Eastern cities. Pictures of people engaged in various ancient occupations. More shelf paper to add to the Time Line from #12. A world map. Tape, markers.

Parent's Time Needed

10-15 minutes.

How to Do It

1. Talk about cities today and cities in the very old days. What are they for? Buying and selling, getting information,and other services. What else?
2. Tape another ten feet to the beginning end of the shelf paper Time Line and mark it B.C., Before Christian Era. Talk about cities beginning as long ago as 1500 B.C. and mark this at 7 feet six inches back from the tape for the A.D. section (allowing six inches for a century).
3. Find pictures of old cities in the Middle East and see if some show people in various occupations. Tent making, camel driving and writing are some occupations that became specialized by 1500 B.C.
4. Talk about two other new ideas of that time: chariots, and the seven day week.
5. Find the Middle East on the map and mark some cities.

Age of Child

10-14

How to Tell If It Worked

Can the child mark 1500 B.C. on the shelf paper? Can he or she understand that there might have been a time with no cities? Look up Nomads.

Easier and Harder Ideas

1. A younger child can draw pictures on the Time Line of cities that look like the old cities in the books.
2. An older child can mark the 100 year marks on the Time Line and begin looking for other things to mark, that happened in B.C.

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China and Rome Get Connected

Reason

To help your child understand that today many countries are connected by air or boat travel but that this was not always so.

Materials Needed

Encyclopedia or library picture books showing cities in China , India, the Middle East, and Rome, a shelf paper Time Line, a world map and markers. Airline brochures with a map of routes if possible.

Parents Time Needed

10-15 minutes

How to Do It

1. Find China and Rome on the world map. Mark them and talk about how long it would take a caravan to go between them (or connect them). Mark 100 B.C. on the Time Line for when these routes might have been established.
2. Talk about and mark possible caravan routes between the Middle East and India.
3. Look for pictures of the Indian Ocean and find it on the map. Talk about how Roman sailors figured out that the monsoons (heavy rainstorms) blew one way in the Fall and the other way in the Spring. So they started crossing the Indian Ocean to the South China Sea to buy new things and return when the wind changed direction. The monsoons blew east in the fall, and west in the spring. Where did the sailors spend the winter?
4. Mark these Oceans and routes on the map. How much would new things cost that were gotten this way? (real luxuries).
5. Look at an airline map of the world and see where the planes fly today.

How to Tell if it Worked

Can your child mark these places on the map? Can he or she draw a water route for travel on the map?

Easier and Harder Ideas

1. A younger child can draw boats, that look like the ancient ones in pictures, on the Time Line.
2. An older child can look up the Silk Road caravan route and see where offshoots of the Silk Road took additional trading.

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Two Nations in the British Isles

Reason

To understand that there are two nations in the British Isles, Ireland and the United Kingdom which includes, England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Materials Needed

Map of Europe and the British Isles

Parents Time Needed

5-10 minutes

How to Do It

1. Talk about the two islands of the British Isles separating the nations from Europe.
2. Talk about how this would affect the language and the culture.
3. Find and outline the four areas in the United Kingdom: England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.
4. Talk about the ties between Britain and the United States:
   America once belonged to Britain;
   Many Americans are of British descent;
   Sharing the English language;
   Share much that is similar in culture.

Age of Child

10-16

How to Tell If It Worked

Can your child see that an island would create a separate nation?

Easier and Harder Ideas

1. A younger child can color in the four areas of the United Kingdom.
2. An older child can research the causes of religious strife in Northern Ireland and put markers on the map when it is mentioned on T.V.

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The Beginning of Nations

Reason

To help your child understand that by having a nation with national boundaries, thousands of people can move around inside it. Nations did not always exist.

Materials Needed

World map, markers, library picture books, shelf paper Time Line, a book on Marco Polo.

Parent's Time Needed

10-15 minutes

How to Do It

1. Mark 1300 A.D. on the shelf paper Time Line. Talk about the Mongolians and the political unity they established in the 13th century.
2. Find Mongolia on the map. Talk about how far Marco Polo had to travel to go to China and Mongolia from Europe. Having Mongolia as only one big country helped a lot.
3. Talk about the Chinese products like tea and gunpowder that were brought by travelers like Marco Polo back to Europe.
4. Talk about other skills brought back to Europe during this time such as printing or the use of the compass and even the idea of the compass. Thousands of people traveled between Europe and Asia bringing many new things.

How to Tell If It Worked

Can your child draw a line around Mongolia on the world map? Look in history books and see if Mongolia used to be bigger.

Easier and Harder Ideas

1. A younger child can draw a line around other nations on the map. He or she can color flag replicas with crayons and white typing paper. They can be strung up for decorations.
2. An older child can tell about what is easy about traveling inside one nation. Look up what is harder about traveling between nations: different money, different language, possible wars. What else?

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Junior High/Enablers
Middle School
Geography/Math
History

MAP YOUR HISTORY TRIP

REASON

To help students use geography, history and math for a real plan.

WHAT YOU NEED

Maps, travel brochures, travel schedules.

PARENT'S TIME NEEDED

5 - 10 minutes to gather materials.

WHAT TO DO

1. Plan where you would like to go to a historical site out of state.
2. Plan a day-by-day schedule of sight-seeing, meals and lodging. List three historical locations. List what you want to see and why.
3. Plan two budgets: one for luxury, one for economy. Find out prices from a travel agent or the brochures.
4. Figure total mileage.

AGE OF CHILD

8 through adult.

HOW TO TELL IF IT WORKED

What would the trip cost? How far is it? Would someone take the trip? Are there more historical sites in that area?

EASIER AND HARDER IDEAS

1. Plan a trip to a historical site in your state. Use maps and choose roads to be taken.
2. Plan trips to other states and other countries. Interview people at school who've gone on trips. Learn about the new places: Where to eat and what to see, what their historical places include.

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PARENT LETTER/FEEDBACK SHEET

Dear Parent:

Did you know you are the child's most important teacher? Would you take 5 minutes this week and do this activity with your child? Please tear off the sheet below with your ideas and comments and send it back to the teacher.

Thank you,

Date:

____
(Teacher)

(tear off)

- -

Date:

FEEDBACK SHEET

For:(Child's name)______________

1. Did you or someone else do the activity with the child?
Yes______ No______

2. If yes, how many times did you do the activity? Once?___
More than once?_____

3. How much time did the activity take? - - - - - - - - - - -
0 15 mins. 30

4. Did you enjoy this activity with your child?
Yes_____ No______

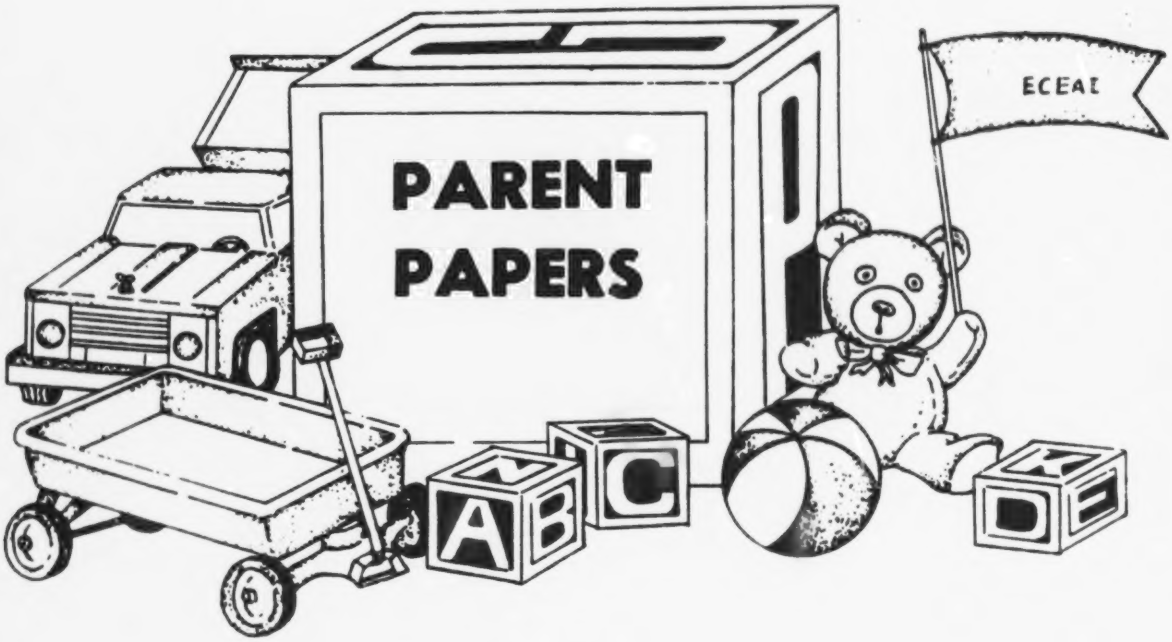
5. Did you feel your child understood it?
Yes_____ No _____

6. Do you feel your child needs more help in this area?
Yes_____ No_____

7. Please share any adaptation you may have of this activity, or describe a new activity you would suggest. Thanks for cooperating!

____
Signature

____
Teacher's Name



PARENT PAPERS

These Parent Papers may be used as handouts at parent meetings, as an extra page in the newsletter sent home with the children, or as a single page taken home. Parents are important partners in children's learning. Our goal is to help your center include parents in the learning process in a way that saves time and effort for you, while providing professional resources for parenting. It is also our belief that the most effective way to reach children is to reach their parents too. By providing a variety of formal and informal ways to be in touch with parents your center is building trust and two way communication. Many parents find the guidance and support of knowledgeable adults to be invaluable. By learning some of the ways professional early childhood personnel interact with children, parents often can feel more confident with their children at home. You may want to share this point of view with staff at a staff meeting.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Teacher's Name ____________________

PARENT PAPERS SET I

What to Expect from a Day Care/Preschool Program #1

Goals of the Early Childhood Program Experience

For Children

- Be themselves
- Express themselves through using art and play materials freely and constructively
- Learn to be tolerant, creative, cooperative and imaginative
- Learn independence
- Learn limits of behavior
- Increase ability to handle emotions constructively

For Parents

- Become more aware of child's world and understand his behavior
- Achieve a more positive approach to child-adult relationships through professional guidance and shared experiences with other parents
- Be sympathetic, understanding a child's first experience away from home
- Provide worthwhile outlet for abilities of parents outside the home and job
- Learn constructive techniques of working with children

What We Teach

- Is not always evident to the casual observer
- Sets the stage by guiding unobtrusively
- Maintains an atmosphere of freedom and friendliness within limits
- Allows the children to develop their own ideas. Adults stay in the background ready to help if needed.

Objectives of the Early Childhood Program

I Physical Development. Our objective is to provide experiences, equipment and activities which contribute to physical fitness and coordination. We plan:

1. To provide each child with a balance of active and quiet activities.
2. To provide the child with activities for small and large muscle development.
3. To provide the child with balanced and nutritious meals or snacks.
4. To help the child towards achieving awareness and mastery of his or her physical self.

II Intellectual Development. Our objective is to provide experiences that increase the child's ability to solve problems by acting on the environment around him or her. This will include learning to observe, describe, discover, think, organize and use the information he or she recieves through the five senses. We plan:

1. to develop language ability and vocabulary through all activities and experiences

2. To provide problem solving and decision making situations to enhance the child's thinking ability.
3. To expose the child to as much of the world as possible through field trips and actual experience.
4. To allow the child to express himself or herself creatively, to manipulate and to explore materials.
5. To provide the child with a variety of learning experiences including cooking, art, water play, and dramatic play.

III Emotional Development. Our objective is to encourage children to develop and grow in positive feelings about themselves and their abilities; who they are and what they can do. We plan, with your help:

1. To develop self confidence and feelings of achievement.
2. To provide experiences that teach children to deal constructively with their frustrations.
3. To encourage children to respect themselves, the other children, adults, materials and equipment.
4. To encourage children to take pride in their ethnic group, family, and community.

IV Social Development. Our objective is to help each child to develop an awareness and appreciation of others, moving from preoccupation with self towards involvement with others. We plan:

1. To provide the child with opportunities to enjoy knowing and being with other children and adults.
2. To provide sharing experiences for the child and to provide for give and take in relationships.
3. To help the child learn to trust adults outside the family and to be able to ask for help when it is needed.

V Strengthening Families. Our objective is to build a close and positive relationship with families of children in the program.

____
Teacher's Name

PARENT PAPERS SET I

What to Expect from a Day Care/Preschool Program #2

What Your Child Will Be Learning

We hope the activities in the program will offer your child a variety of ways to have fun. Play can include spontaneous and productive experiences that help children learn about their world and their relationship to it.

The dramatic play corner offers an opportunity for dramatic play through which children can assume the roles of the mother, the father, the baby and many others. They can act out some of their feelings about people and events. Children can express their fantasies, their fears, their impulses and their needs. They can have their turn with power.

Art activities such as easel and finger painting, fruit and vegetable painting, allow for the discovery of colors, designs and shapes. While exploring the creative possibilities of paint, clay, paste and paper, children can find ways to express their feelings and experiences.

Sand and water play involve the sense of touch and the use of small muscles. In this relaxed play children can use pitchers, funnels, measuring spoons, and sponges for pouring, measuring and squeezing. This also helps future math learning.

Food experiences such as making juice and slicing bananas allow the different characteristics of food to be seen, tasted, smelled and touched. This is one way to help children become more aware of and sensitive to learning through their five senses.

Reading stories and having books for children to use stimulates many interests. Books become recognized as sources of information. Through discussion of pictures children observe details. Discussion promotes language development and self-expression. Books can foster the sharing of experiences such as trips, visits from favorite friends and relatives.

Blockbuilding stimulates and promotes creative play. Complex and imaginative structures arise. Selecting the blocks involves making comparisons and classifying sizes and shapes.

Outdoor equipment which stimulates climbing, jumping, sliding and balancing, helps large muscle development and coordination.

We hope that through these activities children will have the opportunities to gain confidence in themselves and their abilities. Self-direction, interest, curiosity, and genuine pleasure in activities of all kinds promote the best possible intellectual development according to recent research.

Teacher's Name

PARENT PAPERS SET I

What to Expect From a Day Care/Preschool Program #3

What to Expect

Ask yourself:

1. What do I expect from an early childhood experience?

For my child:

- the companionship and challenge of friends
- the guidance and support of knowledgeable adults
- the time and space and opportunity to explore many creative materials
- the excitement and enticement of planned activities that provide foundation concepts and learnings
- the strengthened feeling that he or she is a capable, active learner
- the pleasure of a world of his own, apart from his family where she or he is a valued individual
- the headstart on specific learnings and attitudes that will be expected in later school years

For myself:

- the assurance that my child is safe
- the prospect that he will grow and gain knowledge, self-confidence, and social skills
- the hope that he or she will be helped in his or her later school experiences
- the chance to discuss my child and his needs with a "caring teacher."
- the chance to observe other children and stages of development
- the chance to extend my knowledge of effective alternatives in child rearing practices
- the chance to meet other families with similar-aged children facing the same or very different problems
- the opportunity to be reliable in picking up my child and paying fees

Please remember -
Not everyone expects the same things from a program so not all of these items will be important to everyone, nor will they all carry the same weight.

2. How can parents know what a program is doing?

- Do the children in the program seem relaxed and sure of themselves, or do they seem tense and anxious?
- Do they seem to like each other (some of the time)?
- Are they interested in some activity most of the time?
- Do they seem comfortable chatting and explaining and questioning or are they silent most of the time?
- Are they using all their senses to discover and handle their play materials?

By observing the teacher:

- Does the teacher welcome each child and seem to be aware of what each child is doing?

- Does the teacher speak naturally and directly to a child, stooping to his or her eye level most of the time?
- Does the teacher step in to stop fights or change activities before behavior becomes disruptive?
- Does the teacher seem upset or blaming when accidents occur?
- Does she show respect and genuine interest in a child's work?

By observing the program:

- Is the schedule a rigid timetable or a natural sequence?
- Are there activities for individuals and small groups as well as the whole class?
- Do some activities offer quiet experiences and opportunities for creating and exploring?
- Are the children's interests and comments taken into consideration in the planning of activities, or are all of the activities planned by the teachers?
- Are children permitted and encouraged to do things for themselves such as hang up their clothes, pour their own juice, manage art materials?

By observing the space and equipment:

- Is equipment sturdy and non-frustrating?
- Does the equipment upkeep show concern for health and safety or are there splinters and wobbles?
- Is there imaginative use of color and shape?
- Is there enough material to really carry out an idea rather than just a few blocks or dishes?
- Are bathrooms clean and sweet smelling, and equipped with sturdy step stools?
- Are examples of children's art work displayed around the classroom to be admired and shared?
- Are materials stored so that children may take them out and put them away independently?

By observing the outdoor area:

- Is there an enclosed space for outdoor play?
- Is the outdoor equipment sturdy and secure?
- Does the outdoor play equipment allow children the chance to run, stretch, pull, climb, yell and in general use up stored energy?

By asking about teacher and director credentials:

- Are certificates and diplomas received for training prominently displayed?

I can help this program and its activities or equipment in the following way:

Teacher's Name

PARENT PAPER SET I

Developing Your Child's Self Image #1

Building Self Esteem

Self esteem or self confidence affects how you manage your needs, deal with others, produce in life, solve conflicts, search for meaning in life, and how you develop a closeness and feel responsible for meeting other's needs. Self esteem and a positive self image go hand in hand.

The belongingness and feelings of significance that a child gains in the family can help him to be successful in every area of life. Confidence and a sense of achievement are built up in the same way for adults as for children, in small steps. Children need to feel worthwhile and need to have a sense of self respect just as adults do. Aggression in children is often a symptom of a poor self image.

Steps that build self esteem include decision making. Children need the opportunity to make decisions. Limit choices to two or three as too many choices are frustrating and confusing. Some appropriate choices for a young child are:

1. Choose which vegetable or fruit or dessert the family will eat for supper. Talk about color, smell, size and taste. Choose the size dish to serve it in - not too big and not too small.

2. Select the clothes she will wear - again, from a limited number.

3. Share a grocery shopping trip. Paste labels from empty cans or boxes that you often buy onto a piece of cardboard. This becomes his "shopping list." Let him put these items in the cart He feels good because he is big enough to help. This is a boost to his self image. Mother benefits too because the responsibility of helping keeps him busy.

4. Offer the child the opportunity to choose between two items to buy in the hardware or clothing store when you have no preference for one or the other. How nice it is to have one's opinion valued and respected.

5. Offering a choice of alternatives when a child is absorbed in a behavior of which you disapprove, can turn an unhappy situation into a learning experience. It also will help avoid a power struggle and will give the child the responsibility of making a decision.

   Mother can explain, "Crayons are for paper or coloring books, not for magazines (or walls). Which would you like to have, a coloring book or some paper?"

   This calm approach teaches the child something important: some things are for coloring, others are not. This may take several reminders but the child has not been "put-down" by a frustrated, angry adult. He's learned something. And he knows what to ask for next time.

More Ideas

Respect for children, respect for materials and equipment, and respect for adults could well be a "theme for the year" for many homes and centers. After two weeks can you see if your child is handling some one object more carefully?

Teacher's Name ______________________

PARENT PAPERS SET I

Developing Your Child's Self Image #2

You and Children - Your Child is "Somebody"

1. Treat your child as if he or she is "somebody." Call your child by his or her name. Help your child to feel that you like him or her. Let your child know you think he or she is able to do things according to his or her age. Try to learn what a certain age child can handle. Say "please" and "thank you" to children. Be as polite to your child as you would be to a grownup.

2. See the child's point of view. The things children do make sense to them. Try to think why a child is acting the way she is.

3. Touch a child to get his attention. Put your hand on your child's shoulder, take his hand or bend down and put your arm around a child to get his attention. Speak in a quiet voice. Speak slowly so he understands. This takes more time but works better than calling loudly across a room.

4. Talk to children. Talking to children builds their language ability. Give sincere approval when a child meets a difficult situation. "Good idea." Try not to talk for your child, or about your child, in his or her presence.

5. Listen to children. Pay attention to children when they talk to you. It may take some time. It lets them feel that someone thinks they are important enough to listen to. It also helps them to talk better. This is a fine way to let children know they are worthwhile.

6. Accept children's feelings. Being sad, glad, lonely, mad, is part of being human. Try to let a child know you understand her feelings by saying, "You're angry when someone takes your doll," or "You're frightened when you hear a loud noise," instead of telling a child to stop crying.

7. Give children choices. Give children a chance to choose whenever you can. A young child around two years old can choose between two things. "Do you want to wear the red shirt or the blue shirt?" An older three or four year old can manage three, four or five choices. Choices should be as equal as possible. Be willing to accept what he chooses.

8. Give directions carefully. If you want your child to do something:

   - Get her attention.
   - Explain carefully what you want her to do.
   - Tell her why she should do it.
   - Show her how to do it.
   - Give her appreciation. You may say "you picked up all your blocks." You may give a special hug. Do something that shows you are proud of her.

9. Avoid comparing. Avoid comparisons between children. When you compare, the child thinks he is not as good as his brother, or that he is better than his brother. Don't say, "Why can't you finish your plate like Tommy?"

10. Let a child know you respect his or her decisions, wishes and needs. He or she will have a brighter opinion of himself or herself. He or she will also be better able to demonstrate respect for others.

11. Build a positive self image with encouragement and praise. A child who THINKS he or she can succeed has a better chance for success than one who expects to fail.

12. Say to the child, "YOU'RE O.K.!" Tell him or her: "I will support your efforts, encourage your skills, respect your decisions, value your opinions, help you through rough spots, and watch you succeed!"

Additional Notes:

Teacher's Name ____________________

PARENT PAPERS SET I

Developing Your Child's Self Image #3

Building Success and Confidence in Children

"Nothing succeeds like success." A child who learns early that he CAN succeed in his little efforts will have confidence in his own ability to tackle greater tasks later. What a child thinks about himself and his ability will greatly influence his potential for success as he grows older. It will also affect his enthusiasm for meeting new challenges and his outlook on life.

We can help children build a positive self image by providing opportunities for them to prove to themselves that they are capable, worthwhile people, worthy of our respect.

Cooperating and Carrying Out Tasks

1. Know your child's limits and abilities and provide only those tasks which he can complete successfully. At this age the attention span is short, and muscle development and coordination are not fully developed. It takes a long time to accomplish things and rushing won't help.

2. She will be confused and frustrated by too many directions at one time. It's best to keep jobs simple or give them one step at a time. "Let's put some of the toys to bed" is less overwhelming than "clean up this mess." Genuine praise after each successfully completed step keeps good behavior going and encourages the child to continue one step at a time. Too big a chore can bring failure and disapproval, and along with it a negative self image.

Help A Child Help Himself

1. Let him spread his own butter, jelly, peanut butter.

2. Let her help herself to servings at meals.

3. Let children help set and clear the table. Build confidence and self-esteem by making this job a learning game. Talk about sizes, colors, numbers and new concepts such as on, in, under, beside, and on top of .

4. Even a young child can feel important when propped up on a stool and allowed to help mother "wash" some dishes (unbreakable ones). Try this activity before mealtimes when young children may be underfoot and impatient to eat. Give him an apron, a stool, some sudsy water, and the cooking spoons and pans you've finished using.

5. Encourage a child to dress himself. This is a big proud accomplishment. Praise the effort and ignore the pants on backwards. To re-do it tells the child he is not good enough to do it himself. He may not want to try again. Try to buy clothing that is easy to put on.

6. Remember, praise after a job well done does a lot to build a good self image.

Teacher's Name

PARENT PAPERS SET I

Reading and Talking to Young Children #1

Talking to Young Children

Between ages two and one half years and age four a child will have a rapid language development - from a few words to an average of 2,000. Adults can help enormously with this development by reading and talking to young children. By helping their child gain new words parents smooth many of the frustrations felt by young children when they can't explain what they mean. A less frustrated child is a happier child.

What can a parent do to help a child see and describe:
1) himself or herself?
2) his or her actions?
3) his or her world?

1. Play a game about your clothing. Tell about something you are wearing and ask your child to tell you something about what she is wearing. For example:
   Parent: "I'm wearing blue pants."
   Child: "I'm wearing a red shirt." (or "a shirt with green stripes.")
   Work up to more and more comments until your child can tell you all about what she is wearing. Suggest that she go in sequence from her head to her toes so she won't forget anything. An older child can tell you the materials that her clothes are made of such as cotton or wool.

2. Tell your child about himself as a baby and as a younger child. This becomes a favorite story. Point out all the things he can do NOW that he couldn't do then. For example:
   Parent: "When you were a little baby you couldn't tell me when you were hungry. You just cried and screamed. How do you tell me now?"
   Child: "I say, may I have something to eat?"
   Build an older child's observation skills by having him describe a younger child in the family.
3. Ask your child to close her eyes and tell you everything that is in the room where you are. Write down what she says. Then ask her to look around and find what she left out.

4. Play "Simon says touch your _________." Use parts of the body children don't always know such as hips, elbows, thighs, forehead and eyelids. Then let him tell you what to touch. Tell him which parts of the body come in pairs.

5. Play the "giving the directions" game. "Go get the blue pencil on the table." Work up to two parts to the direction. "Go get the blue pencil in the middle drawer of the desk upstairs." Add more directions until your child can carry out three or four at one time. Add fun directions such as "hop to the chair," "jump two times," "smile at the cat."

6. In the car (or anywhere) play the "guess what I'm thinking of" game. For instance say, "I'm thinking of something in this car that has two hands wearing mittens (or whatever.) Your child can answer, "That's me." Let her ask you what she is thinking of.

7. Talk about the way people feel. Look at pictures of people in magazines or in a photo album. Do they look happy or sad? rushed or lazy? Ask your child to tell you what makes him happy, angry, or worried. Share some of your feelings with him. The way we move around sometimes tells how we feel. Ask your child to show you how he would move if he were happy, scared or angry.

8. Sing any songs you know to your child. From babyhood on, a child's favorite voices are his mother's and father's. She doesn't care if you can't sinq or think you can't. Sing lullabies, folk songs, Christmas songs, patriotic songs, popular songs, participation songs. Make up your own words. Any song that includes your child's name will be a big hit.

***Books for Young Children

Ahlberg, Janet and Allan. EACH PEACH PEAR PLUM. Viking, 1978. An "I Spy" story.

Anno, Mitsumasa. ANNO'S COUNTING BOOK. Crowell, 1975. Watercolor scenes take us through the year with mathematical concepts suggested on each page.

Arkin, Alan. TONY'S HARD WORK DAY. Harper, 1972. Tony wants to work too, and he proves that he can.

Asbjornsen, Peter C. and J. E. Moe. THREE BILLY GOATS GRUFF. Pictures by Marcia Brown. Harcourt, 1957. "Who's that tripping over my bridge?" roared the troll.

Bemelmans, Ludwig. MADELINE. Viking, 1960. Twelve little French school girls in two straight lines, the youngest one is Madeline.

Birnbaum, Abe. GREEN EYES. Golden, 1953. A white kitten experiences the four seasons of his first year.

Brenner, Barbara. BODIES. Dutton, 1973 (J612). We are all alike, yet "a body and a mind, one of a kind." Also see FACES.

Brooke, L. Leslie. GOLDEN GOOSE BOOK. Warne, 1906. Four stories: "Golden Goose", "Three Bears", "The Three Little Pigs", and "Tom Thumb" with the irresistible Brooke illustrations.

Brown, Margaret Wise. GOODNIGHT MOON. Harper, 1947. A warm and cozy book for quiet night talk.

Burningham, John. JOHN BURNINGHAM'S ABC. Bobbs, 1964.

Burningham, John. MR. GUMPY'S OUTING. Holt, 1970. The riders tip the boat, but all ends well with a grand teaparty.

Brunhoff, Jean De. STORY OF BABAR, THE LITTLE ELEPHANT. Random, 1933. Babar, born in a great forest, learns to enjoy the amenities of civilization.

Burton, Virginia Lee. MIKE MULLIGAN AND HIS STEAM SHOVEL. Houghton, 1939. Mike and Mary Ann accomplish great things.

Carle, Eric. THE VERY HUNGRY CATERPILLAR. World, 1970. An imaginative look at the life cycle of a butterfly.

Crews, Donald. FREIGHT TRAIN. Morrow, 1978. A colorful train experience--one of the best to come down the tracks.

DeRegniers, Beatrice Schenk. MAY I BRING A FRIEND? Illustrated by Beni Montresor. Atheneum, 1964. "Any friend of our friend is welcome here!" say the hospitable king and queen.

DeRegniers, Beatrice Schenk. IT DOES NOT SAY MEOW. Illustrated by Paul Galdone. Seabury, 1972. Animal riddle rhymes for guessing games.

Ets, Marie Hall. PLAY WITH ME. Viking, 1955. Small animals and a little girl meet quietly in a sunny meadow.

Flack, Marjorie and Kurt Wiese. THE STORY ABOUT PING. Viking, 1933. A duckling has a narrow escape before he reaches his houseboat home on the Yangtze River.

FOX WENT OUT ON A CHILLY NIGHT. An old song illustrated by Peter Spier, Doubleday, 1961.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Teacher's Name

PARENT PAPERS SET I

Reading and Talking to Young Children #2

Reading to Young Children

One of the best ways young children learn new words is from a parent reading out loud to them. A young two year old may be happy with a question and answer conversation about one or two of the pictures. Two or three pages and a discussion about them may be just right for a child almost three. The story line is not important at this age - identifying objects, enjoying time with Mom, and cuddling close are what is important. An older child may want the whole story.

Take your child to the library. Let your child pick out his or her own books. He or she may be ready for non-fiction books from the children's section of the library. Books about rockets, Indians, the Coast Guard, railroads, or almost any subject are great and can be used for the pictures alone. Discussing the descriptions at the bottom of the pictures will help him learn about his world. Ask the children's librarian for book suggestions.

Repeat a Lot!

When young children (two and three year olds) like a story they want to hear it over and over again. Enjoy language by substituting new words for old ones and see if they catch you. Or skip a section and see if they notice. Make up a new ending to the story and then encourage them to.

How Do You Read a Book to Young Children?

With a lot of sound effects! Read enthusiastically and with drama. Encourage observing details, asking questions, guessing what happens next, and discussing what's going on. Have your child notice that the page numbers change as you turn the page.

How to Tell if a Book is Good

Do you and your child enjoy the experience?

- Are there brightly colored, realistic pictures? Can you tell what they are?
- Is the story simple and easy to identify with? Since two, three and four year olds are the center of their own world they like stories in which they can see themselves. They particularly enjoy and identify with talking animals or machines such as The Three Bears or The Little Engine That Could.
- Is there a lot of repetition? A young child likes to know what to expect. This gives him a chance to join in the fun.
- Does it have clear language?
- Try to choose books that show men and women, and people of all races, doing a variety of things.

More Benefits of Reading to Young Children

It lets them know you think reading is important in your home.
It helps your child do better in school, research tells us.
It's a time for loving and warmth and makes this intellectual and stimulating experience always remind him or her of a warm and friendly time.

*** Books for Young Children

Freeman, Don. CORDUROY. Viking, 1968. A department store bear finds a friend named Lisa.

Gag, Wanda. MILLIONS OF CATS. Coward, 1928. The rhythm and repetition of the text entices listener participation.

Galdone, Paul. THE GINGERBREAD BOY. Seabury, 1975. He eludes them all but the wily fox.

Galdone, Paul. THE LITTLE RED HEN. Seabury, 1973. The doughty little hen prevails over her lazy housemates.

Ginsburg, Mirra. MUSHROOM IN THE RAIN. Pictures by Jose Aruego and Ariane Dewey. Macmillan, 1974. A mushroom growing in the rain always shelters one more.

Gretz, Susanna. THE BEARS WHO STAYED INDOORS. Follett, 1971. Five furry bears and their spotted dog find fun on a rainy day.

Grimm, Brothers. THE WOLF AND THE SEVEN LITTLE KIDS. Translated by Katya Sheppard with pictures by Felix Hoffmann. Harcourt, 1959. One of Hoffmann's most felicitous renditions of Grimm.

Harper, Wilhelmina. THE GUNNIWOLF. Dutton, 1967. Little Girl goes "pit-pat, pit-pat" and the almost scary Gunniwolf goes "hunker-cha, hunker-cha".

Hoban, Tana. COUNT AND SEE. Macmillan, 1972. Clear photographs illustrate and expand number concepts.

Hutchins, Pat. TITCH. Macmillan, 1971. The littlest one wins. Also try Hutchins' GOOD NIGHT OWL.

Keats, Ezra. SNOWY DAY. Viking, 1963. All the wonder of snow seen through a little boy's eyes. See also WHISTLE FOR WILLIE.

Langstaff, John. OH, A HUNTING WE WILL GO. Pictures by Nancy Winslow Parker. Atheneum, 1974. "We'll catch a fox and put him in a ---? With piano and guitar accompaniment.

Lionni, Leo. SWIMMY. Pantheon, 1963. Swimmy teaches other little fishes the advantage of working together.

McCloskey, Robert. BLUEBERRIES FOR SAL. Viking, 1948. Sal and her mother meet a mother bear and her cub on Blueberry Hill.

McCloskey, Robert. MAKE WAY FOR DUCKLINGS. Viking, 1941. Mrs. Mallard and her eight ducklings travel to the Boston Public Gardens with the help of the police.

MOTHER GOOSE. RING O' ROSES. Warne, 1922. A nursery rhyme picture book by L. Leslie Brooke. Incomparable pigs, and the Humpty Dumpty. See also THE REAL MOTHER GOOSE by B. Wright. Rand, 1916.

Petersham, Maud and Miska. CIRCUS BABY. Macmillan, 1950. Mother Elephant tries to teach her baby table manners with hilarious results.

Potter, Beatrix. THE TALE OF PETER RABBIT. Warne, 1903. Naughty Peter explores Mr. McGregor's garden.

Rey, H. A. CURIOUS GEORGE. Houghton, 1941. George's adventures on land and sea, in jail, and free.

Rice, Eve. SAM WHO NEVER FORGETS. Greenwillow, 1977. Dependable Sam feeds the zoo animals every day.

Sandburg, Carl. WEDDING PROCESSION OF THE RAG DOLL. Harcourt, 1967. An unlikely but lively procession described by a poet.

____
Teacher's Name

PARENT PAPERS SET I

Reading and Talking to Young Children #3

Thinking, Talking and Reading to Young Children

Thinking Activities for Young Children

Observing, noticing and describing

Use all the senses when noticing.
Ask your child -
  How does it look?
  How does it feel?
  How does it taste?
  How does it sound?
  How does it smell?
Making popcorn and walking in the rain are two activities that use a lot of the senses.

Compare characters in a story or song

Make categories for things or feelings. For instance:
  Stack up all the red books or
  stack up all the books you like, or all the books you dislike
  Stack up all the little books. Another day stack up all the big books.

Collecting and organizing
  What do you need for your back yard picnic?
  For your family picture album?
  For her birthday party?

Summarizing
  Can you give a new title for this story? for this song? for this TV show?

How do you know? How can you tell if it's true?
  Which box is heavier, the large one or the small one?

Guessing
  In science this is called hypothesizing but it is often discouraged in school. In the preschool years encourage your child to guess what will happen next and to tell you why.

Talking Activities with Young Children (Only try 3 or 4 questions at any one time)

Ask children:
  What is happening?
  What has happened?
  What do you think will happen now?
  How did this happen?
  Why did this happen?
  What caused this to happen?
  What took place before this happened?
  Where have you seen something like this happen?
  How could we make comething like this happen?
  How does this compare with what we saw or did?

How can we do this more easily?
How can you do this more quickly?

Or ask:
What kind of a thing is it?
What is it called?
Where is it found?
What does it look like?
Have you seen anything like it? -Where? When?
How is like other things?
How is it different from other things?
How can you recognize or identify it?
How did it get its name?
What other names does it have?
What can you do with it?
What is it made of?
How was it made?
What is its purpose?
How does it work or operate?

Kinds of Books for Children

Simple stories, animal stories
ABC books that are clever and different
Counting books for beginners
Mother Goose
Learning books
Lullabies and bedtime/sleepy stories
Books about ourselves and other people
Any book you think your child would enjoy

Books for Young Children

Seuss, Dr. HORTON HATCHES THE EGG. Random, 1940. Dedicated Horton is one hundred percent faithful.

Slobodkina, Esphyr. CAPS FOR SALE. Young Scott, 1947. A tale of a peddler, some monkeys and their monkey business.

Steig, William. SYLVESTER AND THE MAGIC PEBBLE. Windmill, 1969. A careless wish turns Sylvester into a rock, but the tragedy is resolved with humor and tenderness.

Zemach, Harve and Margot. MOMMY BUY ME A CHINA DOLL. Follett, 1966. From an Ozark song. Liza Lou has outlandish plans.

Zion, Gene. HARRY THE DIRTY DOG. Pictures by Margaret Bloy Graham. Harper, 1956. It was such fun getting dirty, but then Harry's family can't recognize him.

For these and more please see your Children's Librarian.

Parent Papers Set III

Understanding Infants and Toddlers (to 24 months)

When you're a first time parent you "need to know it will be O.K. in six months" as one mother said. Child development moves so quickly that whenever a stage seems unpleasant (such as colic, or the "terrible twos") the child will move on to a new stage, perhaps even before you can figure out what to do. The "smile of mastery" is a wonderful thing on a baby's or a child's face. A six month old smiles as he or she masters the upper arm muscles and flaps his or her arms. Watch for these smiles as they mark milestones. In two months (or so) this child will be crawling.

In every description of stages, whether physical, intellectual, social or emotional add plus or minus three to six months to stages you read about for a particular child. The sequence is often more important than the exact chronological age of the child, and even the sequence may vary. There are milestones for development and the Gesell Institute has a book series with good descriptions that have been validated and re-validated over many years. Since the weeks and months of babyhood are well covered in other sources, we will mention only a few here.

An infant is:

Developing motor skills: the developmental sequence goes from head to toe and from the inner body to the outer body or fingertips. Thus arm movements precede leg movements as can be seen in a 6 to 9 month old learning to crawl by dragging the body along by the arms. Fingertip control comes long after upper arm and then lower arm control. Ages 4-5-6 are still working on eye-hand coordination. Leg control follows arm control.

A toddler is:

Very much into large muscle coordination, having finally graduated from crawling, then cruising (around the furniture), to that all-important first step and a new view of the world.

Infants and toddlers are:

developing language by listening all the time. Around one year they watch an adult's mouth as you speak and even touch it. Reading briefly to a child from picture books (if you can get him or her to sit still) is priceless at these ages.

showing some baby teeth though on a varying schedule. In twins the same age, one may have two teeth and the other six teeth at 7 months of age.

gradually acquiring some skill in feeding themselves, holding the bottle until it's given up for a cup, and picking up finger food of all kinds to eat from the high chair tray.

Characteristic behavior might include:

Playing alone, with little awareness of others. Loving toys that hide the item when dropped through a slot, and then have it reappear. Large muscle toys are a big hit.

Imitating syllables and then language

Being constantly active with an attention span of 30 to 60 seconds. They show tiredness by becoming restless and irritable.

Gradually learning what is acceptable and what is not (such as electric plugs and safety issues like steps). Much repetition is required, the younger the child. Seems to have a need to explore. Brightly colored toys are cheaper than TV remote controls and other "adult " toys.

Infants and toddlers special needs include:

A need for love, affection and cuddling from parents;

They need time, patience, and understanding from adults;

They need simple, regular routines;

They need the opportunity for interaction and language development with adults: talking, singing songs, and hearing others talk.

Since many parents find it necessary to find child care for an infant or toddler, the following list of questions and bibliography may be useful.

at home -
Tape on + xerox

Teacher's Name

PARENT PAPERS SET II

Understanding 2's, 3's and 4's #1

Understanding Two Year Olds

Every child is different as every parent knows. Still, it is helpful to know what other children might be doing at a particular age. If your child doesn't fit his or her particular age group read the Parent Paper for older children or other material about younger children. You may be able to better understand your child's every day behavior and his or her once-in-awhile behavior when you keep in mind these general stages of development.

Did you know you (the parent) are your child's most important teacher? Research has shown this over and over, and research also shows that the most important thing for a child's success and development is for an adult to think he or she is terrific.

A two year old has:

Unevenly developed motor skills - large muscle coordination is good (the child can walk and climb), but small muscles and eye-hand coordination are still not well developed.

Rapid language development - from a few words or short sentences up to 2,000 words by age four.

Gradually acquired some skill in dressing and feeding himself.

Changed in sleep patterns - is gradually giving up day time naps but still needs a rest period and 12 hours sleep at night.

Some baby teeth.

Begun to establish toilet habits and usually can handle his own needs by age four.

A two year old's characteristic behavior might include:

Playing alone, or beside, but not with, others.

Not sharing or taking turns too well.

Often saying "no" but gradually becomes able to accept adult limits. Wants adult approval and likes to be close to mother and father.

Helping around the house and beginning to understand his surroundings and the demands of daily life. Likes to feel familiar with things and have a sense of security.

Imitating language, manners and habits.

Being constantly active and showing tiredness by irritability or restlessness. Seems to have an urgent need to explore.

Gradually learning what is acceptable and what is not. Much repetition is important.

Great curiosity and asking countless questions.

A two year old's special needs include:

A need for love and affection from parents. They also need guidance and a pattern of behavior to follow.

A need for time, patience, understanding, and genuine interest from adults.

A need for simple, clear routines and limited choices.

A need for the opportunity to learn sharing and taking turns, to learn to play cooperatively with other children.

Teacher's Name

PARENT PAPERS SET II

Understanding 2's, 3's, and 4's #2

Understanding Three Year Olds

Every child is different as every parent knows. Still, it is helpful to know what other children might be doing at a particular age. If your child doesn't fit his or her particular age group, read the section for older or younger children in these Parent Papers. You may be able to better understand your child's every day behavior and his or her once-in-awhile behavior when you keep in mind these general stages of development.

Did you know you (the parent) are your child's most important teacher? Research has shown this over and over again and research also shows that the most important thing for a child's success is for an adult to think he or she is terrific.

A three year old has:

Motor skills that are still unevenly developed with large muscle coordination still much better than small muscle and eye-hand coordination.

A full set of baby teeth.

An awareness of the next steps and probable outcomes of his or her activities. The three year old begins to plan ahead.

Rapid language development that continues at full speed. This is the most important and amazing development this year.

Acquired more skills in feeding and dressing herself.

Changed sleep patterns - but still needs a daytime nap or rest periods and nearly 12 hours at night. May get tired easily.

Toilet habits that are getting better.

A three year old's characteristic behavior might include:

Showing more interest in playing with other children. He or she still needs to play alone some, and is not ready to share or take turns too often.

Wanting adult approval and liking to cuddle. May reject the adult but still needs him or her.

Being even more interested in helping around the house.

Liking to imitate language, manners and habits.

Experimenting and exploring within adult limits.

Gradually learning what is acceptable behavior and what is not.

Enjoying looking at picture and story books, and has a better understanding of words. Great curiosity and still asks many questions.

A three year old's special needs include:

Security of love and affection from parents. Adult direction and a pattern of behavior to follow.

A need for time, patience and understanding and a genuine interest from adults.

A need for simple, clear daily schedules and limited choices.

A need for the opportunity to learn give and take, and to play with other children.

A need for a wider scope of activity.

Teacher's Name

PARENT PAPERS SET II

Understanding 2's, 3's, and 4's #3

Understanding Four Year Olds

Every child is different, as every parent knows. Still it is helpful to know what other children might be doing at a particular age. If your child doesn't fit his or her particular age group, read the section for younger children in these Parent Papers or material about older children. You may be better able to understand your child's every day behavior and his or her once-in-awhile behavior when you keep in mind these general stages of development.

Did you know you (the parent) are your child's most important teacher? Research has shown this over and over, and research also shows that the most important thing for a child's success and achievement is for an adult to think he or she is terrific.

A four year old has:

The desire to run - not to walk, and the desire to yell - not to talk. However, he or she still wants adult approval.

Motor development that is still better for the large muscles than the small muscles or eye-hand coordination.

Rapid language development that continues up to and past 2,000 words.

A lot of skill in feeding and dressing himself or herself. May need occasional help.

Sleep patterns that still need up to 12 hours at night.

Toilet habits that are established. Child usually takes care of his or her own needs by the end of this period.

A four year old's characteristic behavior might include:

More independence and reliability.

More interests in many things including an interest in people and the way they act.

Playing with real purpose, and much more imaginative play. He or she begins to pretend to be other people or animals.

Better understanding of his environment and enjoyment of trips. He or she asks searching questions about people and their relationships to others.

Being able to accept necessary limits and restraints from adults.

Liking to be close to mother and father.

Being constantly active. Likes to help around the house, imitate language and habits.

Becoming capable of longer stretches of quiet activity as he or she approaches five.

Learning many new words and asking many questions.

A four year old's special needs include:

A need for love and affection from parents. They also need guidance and a pattern of behavior they can imitate. They need to feel valued.

A need for time, patience, understanding and genuine interest from adults.

A need for a wider scope of activity and limited freedom to move about, and to move away from the home surroundings. Opportunity to do things for him or herself.

Understanding Five Year Olds

Five year olds are considered to be in a "balanced" age which generally means that their aspirations match their abilities fairly well. They are a "perfect little kid" and do not yet pine to play baseball or go to the mall or to a popular music concert. Their motor skills are much better developed than at four, and their eye-hand coordination and fine motor skills are developing rapidly. These are the years in which the world widens out beyond the family with kindergarten, if it has not already done so, with child care and pre-school programs.

The forms of speech mature and its functions become different as well. The early types of speech are egocentric and social. Egocentric speech (talking to one's self) is not designed for communication, but may be used for entertainment or wish fulfillment. Social speech, for communication, develops throughout early childhood. Children think first and talk later, as can be seen with a fifteen-month-old who knows what he or she wants but can't say it. By the age of four or five, the act of talking helps the child think. A curious child within a sensitive, warm environment that encourages exploration and creativity will respond well in school.

A five year old has:

Motor development that continues to improve with large muscles still better developed than small muscles, but tying shoes or using colors and pencils are much more possible. Two children out of 30 still may not have chosen right or left handedness yet and use both.

Rapid language development continues both for egocentric and social communication.

Ability to feed and dress him or herself with occasional help with difficult items.

Sleep patterns that still benefit from twelve hours at night, since naps are mostly gone.

A five year old's characteristic behavior includes:

More independence, reliability and follow through.

More interest in the outside world.

Playing with real purpose and learning through play and other learning situations in many ways.

Better understanding of his or her environment and enjoyment of trips.

Being able to accept necessary limits and restraints from adults.

Being close to mother and father.

Being capable of longer stretches of great activity.

A five year old's special needs continue to include:

> Security of love and affection from parents. Adult direction and pattern of behavior to follow. A need to feel valued.
>
> A need for time, patience and understanding and a genuine interest from adults.
>
> A need for a wider scope of activity and limited freedom to move away from home surroundings. Opportunities to do things for him or herself and for others.

Parent Papers Set III

Understanding Six Year Olds

Six is not as "easy" an age as five, and the "breaking-up" of this age as a child re-vamps for being 7, 8, 9 and 10 is somewhat aggravated by six hours or more of first grade. A first grader will be tired and need to go to bed on time. One child said " I had to sit there six hours! It cuts into my day." These children are antsy and frequently stand with one knee on their chair to eat their meals (which, of course, causes spilling).

Emotions are not as calm as they were at five and more fears appear. The best way to help children overcome fears is to help them find their own practical way of dealing with them. Giving a child a flashlight to shine in the closet or under the bed is one practical tip, which children love. First graders also begin to tell time by the end of the year, and are fascinated by watches. Watching the minute hand move from one number to another, or a digital clock change five minutes, is a good "time-out chair" activity when "time out" discipline is needed. In talking about what "you need" to tell time, one child said, "First you need an arm" (then a watch and so forth).

A six year old has:

Much better vision and continued language development as he or she learns to read.

Motor development that continues to improve, especially for small muscle development as children learn to hold pencils more effectively, and learn to print and write. Large muscle development is good and outdoor play is a must for the active, antsy six year old. Poor nutrition leads to less activity and slower growth.

Ability to take care of his or her own needs in feeding and dressing, and some room clean-up mark the six year old, but occasional help may be needed. Back-sliding occurs with such tasks as making the bed, as the six year old is not as cooperative as a five year old.

Sleep patterns still require enough sleep at night (11-12 hours) so that the child is not tired and cranky, as no nap is possible in first grade.

A six year old's characteristic behavior includes:

More independence, reliability and follow through.

More interest in the outside world.

Playing with real purpose, and learning through play and other learning situations in many ways.

Better understanding of his or her environment and enjoyment of trips.

Being able to accept necessary limits and restraints from adults.

Being close to mother and father.

Being capable of longer stretches of great activity.

A six year old's special needs continue to include:

Security of love and affection from parents. Adult direction and pattern of behavior to follow. A need to feel valued.

A need for time, patience and understanding and a genuine interest from adults.

A need for a wider scope of activity and limited freedom to move away from home surroundings. Opportunities to do things for him or herself and for others.

Families can encourage creativity and thinking skills. The six year old will find the encouragement can lead to interesting "invented" games.

Understanding the Seven to Ten Year Old

If five is a "balanced" age and six is a "breaking up" (of behavior patterns) age, then seven is an inward age that may say things like "nobody likes me". Eight is an outward, happier, expansive age, followed by nine which has been described as "the most nearly neurotic age there is". Nine is followed by ten, which again is a balanced, amiable, relaxed age. Ten is an age that balances its resources already attained and demonstrates the generic traits of childhood. This is the peak of the decade of childhood and precedes the decade of adolescence which leads to "early adulthood" at twenty. Ten, like five, is a golden age of development. (Assuming that the reader will make ample allowance for an individual child.) The sequence of development follows a pattern, even if it is six months or so ahead or behind for a specific child. Each year bears a dynamic relationship to the years before and after it, for in development no year stands alone. The intense, taut-string quality of the nine year old is a necessary predecessor to the more relaxed, more organized ten year old.

The nine year old is more pre-occupied, more self critical, more striving and earnest than the unself-conscious ten year old or the happy-go-lucky eight year old. Nine is less popular with his or her elders than ten is. Ten year olds like their friends, their school -- if it's "good", and likes to learn. He or she is not overly concerned about the teacher as long as the teacher is fair.

Middle childhood, as this period is called, is an extremely "safe" time of life for most children, with colds and respiratory infections being the most common illnesses. Major illnesses have usually already surfaced in a younger child. Nutrition and fitness have become important in this child's life, and outdoor exercise is a must for growing and developing muscles. Children loose their baby teeth and permanent teeth appear. Vision is more focused, but some vision problems have still not been detected.

Memory and language develop all through the school years, and the Parent Papers section on thinking skills in the complete Home Learning Enabler Manual gives many ideas for starting early and enhancing your child's critical and creative thinking. Children, beginning between ages five and seven enter a stage of intellectual development called "concrete operations" which lasts until age twelve or thirteen and precedes "abstract thinking". Concrete means just that -- they have to see an object to understand what you are saying about it.

During these years children begin to understand the viewpoint of others, which improves their ability to communicate. They begin to be able to take all aspects of a situation into account when doing problem solving or decision making.

Creativity depends heavily on encouragement, education and training from an early age. The valuing and usefulness of a created project enhances self-esteem and builds confidence for the next creative project. Using children's drawings and artwork for Mothers Day cards and all manner of greeting card exchanges are one example. The child later sees this art (highly valued) on Grandmother's refrigerator or elsewhere. A photograph can be sent to the child of the display at a distant relative's location.

Ten year old behavior includes:

- sheer delight in physical activity.
- comradeship in groups.

- bursts of happiness and demonstrative affection.
- a conscience that has to be informed to grow; it is in a relative state of immaturity.
- concrete thinking, static concepts that serve him or her very well.
- less tension than at nine, but some nail-biting and playing with hair remain.
- unequal growth rates for boys and girls.
- eating more than at eight or nine.
- not being aware when he or she is tired and ready for bed; he or she still needs to be reminded.
- being interested in the choice of clothes.
- being nearly finished with the money-mad state seen at eight and nine. Some ten year olds save nothing; others save everything.
- fears that are at a low ebb, although unmistakable anger can suddenly explode and anger is thought to be a sub-set of fear.
- no great fondness for work.

Ten is a time for wide expanding varieties of experience. This child wishes to try everything. Both boys and girls get along well with mother, but forerunners of eleven year old discord can show between daughters and mothers. Time management has improved so well that it is a great relief to everyone after seven, eight and nine. This child can be nice, happy, casual and sincere.

A seven to ten year old needs:

- facts, things related to here and now, not abstract concepts.
- affection, love and support from his or her family. A ten year old gets along better with siblings than at nine.
- patience and information as his or her conscience and philosophic ideas and attitudes grow. Understanding these concepts may proceed from the negative to the positive in terms of preoccupation.
- outdoor exercise for growing and developing muscles.
- more food and adequate sleep. Ten is taller, bigger and stronger than nine (or eight).

Five and ten have attributes in common, as do twc and a half, eleven and fifteen. A seven to ten year old is growing physically, emotionally, socially and intellectually. In closing, self esteem at all ages, cannot be underestimated. In a famous study, teachers were told that (average) children in their class were gifted children. At the end of the year they were tested again and showed unusual gains in I.Q. They really were in the gifted and talented range. Tone of voice, facial expressions, touch, posture, all can contribute to self esteem. It was known that these teachers did not spend extra time with these children. Self-fulfilling prophecies and teacher and parent expectations (with support given) are very powerful influences.

Parent Papers III

Understanding the Eleven Year Old

The calm, balanced, flexible nature of a ten year old (plus or minus six months for a particular child), gives way at eleven to a new growth force, eventually to be called adolescence. Many tokens of the growing up process begin to emerge. As with two-and-a-half and age 15, a period of relative calm at 10, 2, and 14 is followed by instability, mood swings, lack of flexibility and what is generally a stage of turmoil.

The emotions of an eleven year old rise with swift crescendos and they have peaks of intensity. Bursts of laughter, yelling, and rudeness can cause endless irritation. This age is in a state of change and is "breaking up" from the smoothness of childhood to allow room for growth into adulthood. In another decade this child will be at the edge of maturity. Parents often feel confused and frustrated by the intense behavior they see, so different from the year before. Often the child does not understand it either and appreciates patience from parents (which, however, is rarely acknowledged).

The eleven year old behavior includes:

incessant bodily activity and energy expenditure

constant eating, talking, and sleeping (but often a growth spurt doesn't really show until the next year for boys). Some have a "fat" period. Many eat steadily after school, take a break for dinner, and then continue their snacks.

developing strength and the beginnings of sexual maturation

dissatisfaction with bedtime, regardless of its time--although needing sleep and peevish without it.

hating work and resisting doing it--good at making up excuses

odd, vague, uncomfortable emotional feelings

more ability to challenge than to respond to parents

willingness to be helpful "when he or she is in the mood", but doesn't want a parent to yell at him or her or be critical. ("They can dish it out but not take it") one parent said.

a lack of capability in answering parents demands

getting on better with one parent than the other

arguing about everything, strenuous self-assertiveness not being into abstract thinking yet--things have to be concrete for them to really understand

It is not easy to understand the laws of growth and development at this particular stage, but eleven year olds need:

time, patience,and understanding. Parents who realize that this is less personal rebellion than a reaction to complexities and uncertainties inside the child.

not too much lenience or too much sensitivity,

an atmosphere conducive to good growth--but the child must do his or her own growing

a full refrigerator and adequate sleep,

good humor, fairness, affection, and interesting activities. Reassurance that "we'll get through this together" without probing inner depths which the child doesn't understand either.

Parent Papers Set III

Understanding the Twelve Year Old

The twelve year old has become less insistent, more reasonable and more companionable then the eleven year old. Maturity is not a uniform, steady process but the behavior of the eleven year old is now leading into areas of new experience and thereby is preparing for increasing discernment and discretion. Twelve relies less on pressure and challenge than eleven, but tries instead to win approval from others. Twelve is basically a period that favors the integration of personality including reasonableness, tolerance and humor. Gone are the belligerent, disagreeable, argumentative and moody expressions of eleven, but they are not entirely gone. But good periods last longer and longer.

In spite of extremes, twelve shows a smoothing out of earlier behavior. Anger is still not under control, though it is moving in that direction. A younger or older sibling may arouse this anger and it may include hitting, chasing, saying mean things or throwing something. An increasing number (but still the minority of twelves) withdraw, respond in silence, go off by themselves to think it over. But twelve no longer argues just for the sake of argument, the way he or she did at eleven.

Eleven was searching for self. Twelve is beginning to take responsibility for more of his or her life, not only in the home and family, but also in the outside world. If twelve has an outstanding characteristic it is enthusiasm. This can be so strong at times that he or she may be carried away by it. Empathy and insight are developing, also, and these traits combine to make an outgoing sociable young person.

The twelve year old behavior includes:

- enthusiasm that depends on a fund of energy that is always available to heighten any like or dislike (as in I hate this food; I love that movie!). However, saturation and sudden collapse in fatigue is possible.
- an increase in conceptual thinking and use of ideas.
- periods of extreme fatigue that can occur when he or she hates everything and everybody that demands anything of him or her.
- not being bored too often because he or she doesn't have time to do all the things he or she wants to do. Colds are most likely to develop when a twelve year old has overtaxed him or herself, but they also have the resilience to rest.
- eating as if their stomach was a "bottomless pit", gaining much competence in cooking and making superb snacks.
- less fighting about bedtime, but some still sleep with a flashlight by their side (although they don't mention fear of the dark or of being alone).

- beginnings that are better than endings.
- spending more time on fixing up his or her room than keeping it in order. Clothes and collections clutter up the room and a bulletin board becomes a must for bits and pieces.
- being clever about saving money out of his or her budget, but a few are reckless and squanderers with a burning desire to spend whatever money they have on hand. Earning money motivates a twelve year old.
- less automatic resistance to work, but a twelve year old may need reminders and may not volunteer.
- not being immune to having his or her feelings hurt, but tries not to show it.
- little jealousy or envy except where siblings are concerned.
- being delightfully open and uninhibited in the classroom as well as at home.
- being especially aware of their appearance, more so as he or she approaches thirteen.
- arriving at the decision and choice of right and wrong almost spontaneously by how they feel, by common sense, or by the inner dictates of conscience. Increasingly the choice of right and wrong is thought of as a deliberately weighed process.
- a very real religious concern at this age. He or she is wondering about it and has, off and on, for the past year.

Every year brings an increment of maturity, and a twelve year old needs:

- time, patience and understanding.
- an atmosphere encouraging good growth, but the child must do his or her own growing.
- his or her own alarm clock, calendar and front door key.
- adults who pick up on his or her interests and help to facilitate his or her goals. (This might include helping your child get to the store to buy parts for a science project, etc.).
- people who see and emphasize his or her high points of achievement because they truly express the child's optimal potential for future growth. The low points still exist however.
- a full refrigerator, patience with snacking, and adequate sleep.
- good humor, love, fairness, affection, interesting activities, and a genuine interest and support from adults.

Understanding the Thirteen Year Old

Many new phases of behavior begin to emerge in the thirteen-year-old during this inward or internalized year. Thirteen-year-olds worry a lot and then "I worry about worrying." One thirteen year old was reassured to have this read to him and said "I do that!" This worrying is usually a normal sign of growth and leads to self-insight. Because so much happens for the first time during this year, time for internal processing is need. He or she is not really withdrawing, but is probing into reality more deeply by turning things over in his or her mind. A thirteen-year-old may look sullen and glum without being either. A thirteen-year-old is reflective but more cooperative than at twelve. He or she may be less spontaneous or out-going. There is less conversation or humor. Sometimes a response is just a shrug. However, a thirteen-year-old is a tremendous self-critic.

Thirteen year old behavior includes:

- getting along with siblings better than at eleven or twelve, except those between six and eleven.
- constant expenditure of new found energy on private projects.
- voracious reading as one way to satisfy an inner urge for new ideas and thoughts.
- extreme busyness, that leaves little time for all he or she wants to do, much less for household chores.
- being friendly, but not communicative or spontaneous.
- being better able to control anger than at eleven or twelve.
- a well established appetite, for some still as large as the twelve-year-old appetite.
- going to bed earlier, but needing parents to remind him or her to turn off the lights or radio.
- caring for hair more than fingernails and toenails.
- being surer of likes and dislikes; is capable of buying all but major purchases.
- having a room that is cluttered not only with clothes and books, but also with papers and dishes from left over snacks on the floor.
- carrying through with chores with a certain amount of willingness.
- enjoying cooking, possibly breakfast on the weekend or deserts from mixes.

Thirteen is beginning to see him or herself more clearly. He or she has good insight and understands what another person means. The thirteen-year-old needs:

- parents that understand when he or she says "I'm not too good-natured."
- parents that don't mind not knowing how to approach him or her when he or she snaps back with one word answers.
- parents that leave him or her alone to allow time for ruminating or cogitating on the day's events (or whatever).
- love and affection, but not in public, as thirteen is often embarrassed by his or her mother (or father).
- a parent that is tactful and reasonable with him or her in a grown-up way, staying on the surface. (Thirteens don't understand their own depths too well).
- parents that support a wide range of hobbies, activities and interests; the happy result is less time spent in front of the television screen.

Understanding the Fourteen Year Old

At fourteen the withdrawal, shyness and touchiness of the thirteen-year-old give way to an open, expansive personality phase with more laughter, noise and singing in the home. A fourteen-year-old is better oriented to both him or herself and to the surrounding environment. Fourteen enjoys life and feels the pressures of mounting energy. A fourteen-year-old has a more mature attitude towards adults in general and to his or her family in particular, but still can be hyper-critical. However, he or she is much less subjective than at thirteen, and has more friends.

Fourteen-year-old behavior includes:

- a new developing capacity to understand how other people feel.
- fighting with siblings verbally rather than physically.
- being sensitive to group standards with friends; devotion to a group may go to extremes and may be in competition with concrete demands of home and school.
- eager, tireless communication with friends, especially on the telephone.
- energy, expansiveness, exuberance, but becoming swamped with undertakings and activities.
- a tendency to be realistic and objective, on the other hand, with a willingness to look at two sides of a question.
- beginning to use his or her mind in new ways, as abstract thinking develops.
- being happy and self-reliant, but also being self-critical, using these new powers of reasoning.
- having crossed over towards more physical maturity, with rapid height growth for boys, and the body form of a young woman for girls.
- continuing the enjoyment of eating.
- having a loud voice.
- knowing enough to go to bed.
- hanging up his or her clothes - most of the time.
- being very aware of outward appearance, especially his or her complexion.
- being more of a spendthrift than in the past.

- a changed attitude towards work.
- being easy going, but getting moody.
- worrying less than at thirteen, but still having pet worries.

No longer pathetically edgy and touchy, the fourteen-year-old seems to be coming into his or her own as a person. His or her maturity level is somewhere between elementary school and senior high school. Emotionally the fourteen year old is not as precarious as last year, and has loosened up from the tight withdrawn ways of the thirteen-year-old. A fourteen-year-old with all his or her qualities of expansiveness, capacity for leadership and readiness for change is thinking about the kind of world he or she would like to live in: a worlds with unity and peace, a better world in general, with a better chance for people to grow up. Indeed if everyone followed the vision they had at fourteen, the world might be a different place. In fact, career planning consultants encourage people to think back to their dreams and ideas of this year.

Fourteen-year-olds need:

- to be helped to bring to full realization his or her promising potentials.
- parents that understand the fuller impact of how much it costs to raise a child.
- parents who accept his or her apology after a sharp word is spoken.
- help in understanding how their activities relate to their whole lives (ie. say, "You'll probably enjoy ice skating your whole life", etc.)
- love, affection and understanding perhaps expressed by a hand on the arm or shoulder, in public.

Understanding the Fifteen Year Old

It may seem that the expansive fourteen-year-old will get better and better as he or she turns fifteen, but the growth cycle hands out another inward cycle at fifteen. He or she may seem apathetic and sleepy, if not actually lazy. This seeming appearance, however, cover inner thinking about new experiences and inner states of feelings. A new capacity to focus on details of thought and feeling characterizes the fifteen-year-old. Many make a noticeable effort to find just the right words to express themselves correctly. Concern with the minute and for precision replaces the expansiveness of fourteen and precedes the integration that comes at sixteen. He or she has a thoughtful, quiet, serious side, that is in evidence.

The behavior of a fifteen-year-old includes:

- showing new sensibilities, irritations, resistances, aversions and suspicions, showing a new self-awareness and perceptiveness.
- omitting or skimping on greetings to family members.
- resisting restraints or restrictions, no matter how reasonable.
- engaging parents in a cold war, which varies in degree, despite feelings of loyalty.
- slamming the door when leaving, especially when getting out at night; following an urge for independence.
- being affected by the pressures of groups.
- being gregarious and liking groups, except those at home; wanting to outgrow parental control, but feeling conflicted about this.
- better relations with siblings, seeing an improvement in them.
- feeling a gnawing anguish if mother and father do not get along with each other.
- sinking into a slump when the effort required to define thoughts and feelings is too great; unfortunately these can lead to school drop-out.
- revealing new interests and hidden talents in reactions to specialized courses and activities at school.
- being neither anti-school or anti-home -- just needs time to mull things over and organize him or herself internally.
- showing an ability to identify with other people and situations.
- loving an argument and dispute for its own sake.
- having a low threshold for all sorts of stimuli (e.g., everything bothers him or her).

- calming down on the subject of clothes

- having emotions like the weather, sunny and gloomy, having times feeling very tired, discouraged and mixed up.

- not getting as mad as often as he or she used to.

- reminiscing about the fears he or she used to have, and about other earlier stages of development. Better yet, he or she may reminisce at sixteen about fifteen.

- needing to maintain an apartness, by withdrawing internally or going to the bedroom, becoming secretive, defensive, not wanting parents to know about his or her activities (no matter how reasonable).

- wanting to think that parents "don't really have the upper hand".

- not being the easiest person to teach in school, but learns quickly in new fields.

- finding that relaxation and sleeping mean a lot to him or her.

A fifteen year old wants to define his or her thoughts, philosophy and place in life. There is a constant cry for liberty and independence (even though he or she may have had these!). He or she is expert at stalling in answers to questions and ends up telling the questioner as little as possible. Security is important to the fifteen year old and he or she wishes it for his or herself, family and the whole world. He or she is down to earth in his or her thinking, revisiting concepts from ages nine and ten. Since fifteen has a tendency to rebel against authority, even though confused and floundering his or herself, it is very important how authority treats him or her. Some of his or her most annoying comments need to be ignored. Real leaders often emerge at fifteen.

A fifteen-year-old needs:

- time to become receptive to requests and questions, his or her answers may come slowly.

- parents that are aware that he or she may be arguing for "fun", but also to get his or her point across. Some maintain a closed mind.

- to not be idle; he or she would rather be rushed than do nothing.

- to have parents and teachers understand that he or she is uncertain and searching, with much turmoil and depth to this inner disquietude.

- parents that understand there are times when he or she wants his or her feelings to be known; one doesn't have to be a genius to figure out the meaning of the cold stare, the shuffled walk, the apathy and quietness.

- love, patience, and kindness to carry him or her through this inner cycle to the greater integration that emerges at sixteen.

Teacher's Name ______________________

PARENT PAPERS SET II

Helping A Young Child Develop Self-Control #1

Discipline: A Learning Process

A disciple is someone who learns. Discipline should be a learning process, not a process of scaring a child into NOT doing something. By explaining and helping a child to understand, you help him to learn how you want him or her to behave. You also help him or her to talk better and to develop self-control. A child who is scared into not doing something or saying something in front of one adult, may well say or do that very thing at school or in the center.

1. Show children what to do instead of saying "Don't", "Stop" and "Quit." Children learn how to act when you show them what to do. Just stopping them doesn't teach them what to do next time. Telling a child "Wait until the floor is dry" is better than "Don't walk on the wet floor." "Hold it this way" is better than "Don't drop it."

2. Use substitutes. If you have to take something away from a child, give her something different to play with. Provide active or noisy activities that are OK to let off aggression. Digging, shouting at the trees outside, mopping are all good. (Saw two feet off the handle of the mop for a very useful new toy.)

3. Encourage little children to think of something else when they are unhappy. Small children forget quickly. Call a child's attention to something else. This will take his mind off his unhappiness. This works very well with children under two years of age.

4. Show a child how to help you when he or she bothers you. If a child is bothering you as you work, find something else for him to do. Show him how he can help. Giving him your attention may be more necessary right then than the job you are doing.

5. Establish trust, build a positive relationship. Build trust with your child by praising her when she comes closer and closer to doing something the way you want her to. This is called "shaping behavior" and lets her know you are cheering her efforts.

6. Aim for consistency. A little child learns best if the rules don't change too much. It's better to have a few rules and really stick to those few. If you have too many rules, you forget them and so does your child. Wait to add new rules until some old situations have resolved.

7. Consider your body language. Signaling a child with a frown or a smile becomes more effective as a child grows older. Tell a young child "I am smiling because ________" or "I am frowning because ________________."

8. Know your child. Some children respond to different rewards or different instructions differently. This can be true even in the same family. Study your child and think what methods help him to understand. Learn what a child his age is capable of handling. This way you won't ask more than he can deliver.

9. Understand your own personal style. Your child can get used to your style but it helps for you both to understand it. Try to respond as a thinking adult rather than as a "super parent" or an infuriated child. (This is hard to do but worth it.) You can tell your child what your style is. "I may not seem upset now but if you do that three times, I'm really going to be upset." Some parents are "slap and Kiss", some are calmer.

10. Consider your child's verbal development. How well a child understands and can tell you what she needs or wants, can be the single most important factor in the smoothness of your relationship. The more you help your child learn new words by reading and talking with her, the faster frustrations can be resolved.

11. Encourage decision-making. Phrases like "Well, Michael you make the decision - either this or this," help him build self control. A decision he has made is more interesting than one you made for him . This skill will also help him in later life.

12. Do some scheduling. Children do best when quiet and active play are alternated. Think over the most difficult times of day. Reflect on what a small (or large) scheduling change might accomplish. If both parents work, some singing in the morning might get the day off to a happier start, for instance.

13. Set up rooms that help the child. Placement of furniture and belongiings so the child "can do it myself" greatly helps to remove frustrations. The competent child that is helped to feel "I can do it" feels good about himself and develops self control.

Summary

Think of something in the course of your childhood that helped to build your self-esteem and thus your self-control. It is important that a child learn that his efforts towards a goal are as important as the goal itself. With this view, failure is less of a defeat as learning occurs along the way. "We'll try again and we'll learn from this" are wonderful words everyone likes to hear.

Parent's attitudes and moods convey healthy respect to children or discouragement. If parents reinforce good behavior children will grow to do what parents expect.

PARENT PAPERS SET II

Teacher's Name ______________________

Helping a Young Child Develop Self-Control #2

Self-Control

What is the most difficult task for you in the area of self-control with your child?

What is the most difficult task for your child in the area of self-control?

What is the most difficult task for you in teaching and guiding your child to control his emotions and actions?

Try to remember a time you visited our classroom:
What are some of the ways adults tried to behave in a socially acceptable manner?
Adult behavior that a child sees is much more impressive than what an adult may say.

Watch your child playing with some of his friends. At home observe several children in frustrating situations. Describe their reactions on another sheet of paper. Try to observe children older and younger than your own child. Observe both sexes.

Discussion

A. Children may need different kinds of self-control for different situations.

A big learning for a young child is to use such words as: "Please give me ______", or "that's mine!" instead of actions such as pushing, shoving, grabbing or hitting. Supply him with the words to replace his actions. Supply the words, "Please open the door!" then say: "Do not kick it." A child needs to be told what to do as well as what not to do. If your first trials of the "use words and not action approach" are not 100% successful, that's O.K. Your child is learning new words. Repeated trials will teach the idea. Try to use words and not actions yourself so your child will see you using acceptable behavior.

B. Sometimes a young child needs to be completely removed from a situation.

If he or she is playing with friends or older children and getting tired, removing him or her to a quiet activity may prevent a quarrel. A chair or place for a "time out" period can be quite successful. The child sits with a book or a toy in the "time out" chair or place, until he or she feels like being with people again.

C. Anticipate that when mother is pre-occupied the child's self-control will deteriorate.

If a mother is having guests, on the telephone, or occupied in some other way and a young child starts to fuss and whine, it is better for mother to interrupt herself briefly than to build a bad habit for the child. She can take him or her to a quiet place with a book or toy. Then say quite firmly, "You may not fuss while I am on the telephone." Even if the child comes out again the idea is planted and if the mother does this every time there is a problem, the desired learning occurs.

On the other hand, if she hands him a cookie this will teach him that if he fusses and whines while mom is busy, he will be rewarded.

After one or two weeks answer the questions at the beginning of this Parent Paper again on a different sheet of paper. See if any answers have changed. If you have extra time list good and bad examples of adults guiding children. Refer to this list of good examples when you need to. Some parents keep their list handy for a crisis moment.

Additional Notes:

Teacher's Name ____________________

PARENT PAPERS SET II

Helping a Young Child Develop Self-Control #3

Children Need Adults for Guidance

As children grow their need to be independent often leads them into trouble. Sometimes they put themselves in danger and often they put the people around them into uncomfortable situations. Frequently they handle things too roughly with eager but awkward fingers. This Parent Paper will point out some of the planning and techniques that can be used in your child's classroom or at home to redirect children's actions into acceptable behavior.

1. Look around your child's classroom. Consider the reason for some of the placement of materials, and the amount of materials available.

   What are some ways children are guided to use materials in a beneficial way?

2. What happens when there is a quarrel over materials or toys?

   What language does the adult use in dealing with the children in this situation?

3. Children learn very quickly by imitation. Adult behavior that children see is much more impressive to them than what the adult may say.

   How does the teacher show good relations between people? How does she show respect for others?

   How does the teacher demonstrate care for materials and equipment?

Discussion

In guiding children adults can:

Strengthen their self-control. Often boosting the child's interest in what he or she is doing, or giving extra materials, will do this.

Reduce frustrations. When a child can't reach his goals the adult can:
- remove temptations
- restructure the situation; provide for a quiet activity; lend a helping hand
- see that his possessions are easy for him to get out and put away. Check the child's room layout.
- remove the child until he regains his self-control (ride a truck outside, go to his room with a book, use the time-out chair)

Appeal to understanding. Explain how and why you want something done (or not done). Practice doing it correctly 2 or 3 times. You might say, "Can you pick up two toys and I'll pick up two toys? How many toys do we have now?"

Use imagination. Take roles. "You be the Baby Bear and I'll be Momma Bear and we'll ______________." (Using special voices is a big help). Have children take turns giving you instructions.

Remember:

- A positive approach brings positive results.
- The ripple effect: a highly emotional approach distracts the family. If adults yell, children will too.
- Focus on what is being done rather than on emotion or on the child. "Please paint on the paper and not on your chair."

More Ideas:

Give gifts that help with future quiet times - crayons, drawing paper, spiral notebooks or photo albums. Have children make memory books of vacations which include pictures, photographs, even pressed weeds from summer or from a walk with grandmother. Keep old magazines, paste, blunt scissors and other interesting materials in a special box for quiet times.

Evaluation:

Have you tried two of these ideas in the last two weeks? Give yourself a blue ribbon or a pat on the back as a "good parent award".

Additional Notes:

Teacher's Name ______________________

PARENT PAPERS SET II

Toys That Teach: What to Choose and How to Make Some #1

Toys that Teach: What to Choose

While choosing toys consider the major areas in which a child develops. Toys that teach and enhance development will be the result of careful selection. The major areas of a child's development are: physical, mental, social and emotional. The following listing gives some ideas for toys for preschoolers in these four areas. Write your own ideas in the margins and keep this Parent Paper handy for birthdays, Christmas, calls from grandparents or other special occasions.

For two and three year olds - Children this age especially need toys that build physical coordination, develop independence and satisfy curiosity.

Physical Development : "Fitness"

- Steps for climbing to reach sink and toilet
- Large balls
- Doll carriage
- Large trucks to ride
- Large light hollow blocks (see Parent Paper #3 in this series for how to make some)
- Swing set, climbing gym, tricycles, outdoor equipment
- Sandbox outdoors

Mental Development: "Brainwork"

- Simple inlay puzzles (just a few pieces to start)
- Put-together train, boat
- Colored beads to string
- Legos, table toys that interlock (store and use in gift type boxes)
- Blocks
- Rubber animals and people to use with blocks
- Picture books, song records
- Shiny metal mirror
- Water toys for bath tub or sink

Social Development: "Teamwork" (make believe helps learning)

- House keeping equipment
- Dress up hats and clothes for boys and girls
- Large unbreakable washable doll
- Ride-a-stick horse
- Clothespins, clothesline for hanging art work, doll clothes
- Paper bags, grocery boxes and cans to play "store"
- Tea set, plastic dishes, eggbeater, pots and pans
- Small cars and trucks

Emotional Development: "Tension Releasers"

- Rocking chair - rocking horse
- Pounding toys
- Large brushes, poster paints, crayons
- Clay, plasticene, play dough
- Finger paint (use in bathtub for easy cleanup)
- Sand and cups, pails, spoons, strainer, shovels, orange juice cans - for pouring, digging, modeling

Musical instruments - bells, xylophone, triangle, drums, pans
Straws to blow bubbles

Four and five year olds - Children this age have a special need for plenty of activity. They want to learn about their world by seeing and doing things. Teamwork is getting better and toys that help with all these needs are sure to teach. All the above toys are still good, plus the following additions:

Physical Development: "Fitness"

Add to the equipment listed:
Old tires on the ground for jumping
Beanbags and baskets or boxes to throw them in
Large wooden or cardboard boxes to play train
Wagon

Mental Development: "Brainwork"

Blackboard and white chalk (will be used in to grade school).
Small sized desk or table and chair
Bulletin board to pin up his or her works
Books and records with more detail than for age three
Puzzles with more pieces
Crayons, paper of several sizes including newspapers
More put-together toys
Lotto games
Scissors with rounded points
Glue or paste

Social Development: "Teamwork"

Small cars and trucks (play "gas station")
Finger and hand puppets
More blocks for the set he or she has started
Doctor kit, hospital kit
Flannel board and flannel cut-outs
More props for make believe such as costume jewelry, hats from different adult occupations

Emotional Development: "Tension Releasers"

More toys or cans for sand and water play
Eggbeater for water play
Hammer and nails for supervised woodworking
Painting of all kinds (plain water and a roller outside in the summer)
Musical instruments and record player

Additional notes:

Teacher's Name ______________________

PARENT PAPERS SET II

Toys that Teach: What to Choose #2

What Toys Can Teach

Math

Math learning begins when a child learns that two parts of a whole can be taken apart and put back together again. This can happen cutting a cupcake or an apple in half, or with blocks - one long block and two short blocks that combine in length to equal the long one. The learning of vocabulary for math is very important in early years. How much, too much, half full, all gone, a quarter full and other measurements are part of sand and water play.

Estimating is a process used throughout life and is learned in block and water play. Watch a child estimate where to put two blocks to make the bottom of her bridge. This skill improves as three year olds become four year olds. Ask a child to guess how many more spoons full (or cups full) of water are needed to fill up a pot during water play. Fractions will not be so strange in elementary school when a child has been talking about them for years. Look for activities that ask: more or less? light or heavy? thick or thin? long or short?

Toys that help math learnings include:

- Blocks
- Sand or pouring materials within a large pan such as rice, macaroni, bird seed, or cornmeal
- Water, cups and utensils
- A ruler
- A tape measure
- Puzzles
- Straws

Language/Pre-reading

A child must learn to talk and think before he or she can learn to read. Any activity that "gives" a child new words is valuable in the early years. Looking at and talking about a book or some pictures a few minutes every day will do a great deal to help your child in first grade. Records and songs also help children develop vocabulary.

Any toys that help a child to see sameness or difference in objects, pictures, shapes, colors or symbols helps build reading skills. Stringing beads, working with "fit-together" table toys, looking at details in pictures, and talking about what people are doing, all help readiness and language skills.

Toys that encourage language/pre-reading skills include:

- Books
- Records
- Lotto games (make your own from two matching catalogs)
- Puppets
- Games, especially board games
- Old magazines with pictures
- Props to act out stories read in books
- "Fit-together" toys
- Dice or dominos to match dot groupings

Learning through the Senses

The more senses involved in a learning, the stronger the learning will be. For example, the smells and tastes of holiday foods can take us back to certain times and events in our own childhoods.

In addition to seeing and learning to observe carefully, hearing samenesses and differences in sounds and recognizing common sounds are important for learning. Touching concrete objects, actually handling materials, is essential for young children and doubles or triples the impact of adult learning too. Learning to identify substances by their smell is fun for young children and can be a springboard to new converstaions and thus to new words.

Children need to use their sense of taste, to learn such words as crunchy, sweet, sour, mushy and sticky. Most two year olds, who can barely talk, can tell you the name of their favorite cereal. Talking about food while you are eating with a child is a wonderful time to build vocabulary identifying foods and their textures. For example: "This cracker tastes crunchy and salty."

Toys and activities that help children learn through the senses include:

Musical toys or instruments
Objects placed inside small boxes for a listen and describe activity. Fasten the boxes securely. Try rice, pebbles, pennies, beans. For a younger child make matching pairs of "listening boxes." Ask the child to find a box that sounds the same as yours.
Records, song books
Making popcorn
Kitchen items placed inside jars for a smell and describe activity. Try a tea bag, mustard, peanut butter, chocolate.
Objects placed inside a sock such as a stone, a stick, a pine cone, a spoon or a cotton ball, provide a "feel box." Have the child describe what he feels.
Activities in the kitchen. Tearing lettuce for salad, making instant pudding, pouring ingredients into a bowl are good for young helpers.

Teacher's Name ____________

PARENT PAPERS SET II

Toys that Teach: What to Choose and How to Make Some #3

How to Make Toys for Your Child

Toys or activities that are made at home are especially interesting to young children. They carry an extra ingredient of love and the child feels important, like "somebody special." The price is right (low) for home made toys and often the play value is long lasting.

1. Blocks Rinse out and stuff half gallon milk cartons with crumpled newspaper. Tape securely closed to form a square end. Or jam one inside a second to form a stronger block. Can be covered with colored contact paper but this is not necessary. Tip: Can be done two or three at a time while watching TV.
2. Puzzles Glue a colorful magazine picture on cardboard. Cut into three or four shapes for a two or three year old, five to ten shapes for a four or five year old. Store each puzzle in a separate manilla envelope.
3. Ride in Train Line up 3 or 4 cardboard boxes for a train children can sit in. Add slips of paper for "tickets" and appoint a "ticket man." Good for rainy weather.
4. Play House Obtain a very large carton from a washing machine, etc. or from a moving company. Mark a door and windows with a marker. Cut out the doors and at least one window. This lasts two weeks or more and is greatly appreciated.
5. Tent Place a blanket over a card table. This allows games about camping, army, or whatever the child's imagination chooses. With a pillow inside and some books the tent can be left up in a child's room to be a reading corner.
6. Puppets Stuff brown paper lunch bags with newspaper. Secure them with a wire twist-tie or rubber band. Draw faces and hair with markers. Show your child how to poke these up from behind the dining room table. Discarded white or light colored socks also make good puppets. Draw faces on them with markers.
7. Indoor sandbox Fill a large roasting pan or basin with macaroni, birdseed, cornmeal or beans. Any substance that will pour is good. Provide cans, measuring cups and a funnel. When your child is finished, store the "sand" in a plastic bag or cover with aluminum foil. (Good for early math learnings.)
8. Beads for Stringing Empty spools and a shoelace. Spools can be painted if desired. Cheerios to string for the birds with an needle and thread. Rigatoni to string on a shoe lace for a "necklace" and a "bracelet."
9. Easel for Painting Tape paper to the bottom of the refrigerator door. Place newspaper on the floor and let your child sit on the floor with his crayons or paint.
10. Home Made Paint Add food coloring to liquid starch. For finger paints, use instant pudding.

11. Food coloring During water play put a few dnops of red food coloring in. Later add a few drops of yellow and ask the child what happens. Do this with blue and yellow; for red and blue. Freeze ice cubes of different colors. Put a red and yellow ice cube in a bowl amd ask your child to tell you what happens. Add a squirt of liquid soap to water play to make bubbles.

12. Playdough Mix 2 cups flour with 1 cup salt, 1/4 to 1/2 cup water, 1/4 cup oil and food coloring of your choice. Keep in a plastic bag. Let your child mix it.

Additional Notes:

Parent Papers Set III
Thinking and Language Skills #1: Creativity, Memory Stretching and Observing

Creativity

One of the ECEA Institute's researchers bought a new house when her sons were 4 1/2, 3 1/2 and 1 1/2 years old, and she was pregnant with her daughter. The family moved into it in February and the ground around the house was frozen too hard for the builder to put in the sod for grass--a benefit this builder provided. Family conversation frequently centered around when "they" were going to put in the grass--a matter of great concern to a family of three little boys who were going out and coming in all the time. Finally, one day in the car, after about the fiftieth comment on putting in the grass, the 3 1/2 year old son piped up and said: "Who put in the mud?" It was such a good question, the researcher doesn't remember what she answered! It had been raining for 3 to 4 weeks and there was a lot of mud.

This is a good illustration of thinking skills--although this "looking for assumptions" skill, in this case an adult assumption that everyone knows who put in the mud, whether God or nature or (fill in your preferred answer), is a little advanced for a 3 1/2 year old.

Creative thinking skills are valuable to children and adults and this researcher came to value them more and more as her children were growing up and asking questions, and as she learned more about them at different age levels. A creative person has the confidence to express himself or herself and ask questions. A creative person is purposeful and courageous. Children that practice thinking skills move to the valuable "thinking on their own" so necessary in adult life. Creativity is important in all field endeavors, whether in designing a new part for a microwave receiver (which the 3 1/2 year old eventually did as an electrical engineer), or in the field of cooking or the arts. Creativity can even be applied to designing a new financial product for a banking system, which one of the children did as an adult.

No person needs to ever pass out of the stage of asking "why?" there are no more exciting words to hear from a child or an adult than "I've got an idea!" Encouraging creative thinking is essential for the workplace and the home and thinking at home, with children, is a continuing and rewarding surprise.

In an easier to harder sequence, a short list of thinking skills might include:

1. Observing
2. Comparing
3. Classifying
4. Imagining
5. Cause and Effect
6. Summarizing
7. Looking for Assumptions and Hypothesizing
8. Telling the Reason Why
9. Decision Making
10. Problem Solving
11. Understanding and Empathizing
12. Organizing

Try these questions that follow on your children, maybe on Saturday morning. (One doesn't have to be very alert or look good to enjoy this activity). All of this "quality parenting" takes only 5-10 minutes. And, even five minutes a week in conversation with a parent, can benefit I.Q. scores for three year olds (Jones 1989). This rise in I.Q. was due to the children developing vocabulary and coming up with more ideas of things to do. This interaction builds vocabulary, which is measured on many tests.

Memory Stretching

Questions like these are good for memory stretching:

Does your back door swing in or out?
What did you have for dinner yesterday? lunch? breakfast? the day before? (Mom may be the cook, but she probably has forgotten.)
What did your teacher wear yesterday?

From imagining:

What would you do if it snowed green snow? (One answer, age five: I'd get a green snow suit, and a green sled, and Mom couldn't find me!)
What would be funnier if it were bigger?
What would work better if it were smaller?
What would make cars better? (One answer, age ten: put a swimming pool on the roofs to use at stoplights when it is hot. We didn't get into the logistics of how this would work.)
What would be prettier if it had more colors?

If these sample questions are fun with children, then the following suggestions on each thinking skill might also be some to try. A few minutes at a time is better for a child's attention span - and is usually better for the adult's available time.

Observing

The idea is to encourage a young child to notice things in more detail. Ask your child to look around a room and tell you everything he or she sees. (This is especially good for waiting rooms.) Ask her to describe what a friend is wearing. What is the friend doing? Look at magazine pictures and describe the people in the pictures. Your child's list at first may be short, but as you encourage him or her it will get longer.

Observation starts young and should be valued. One two year old, upon looking at his new baby sister (one year old), observed "He don't gots any hair". This child had two brothers and made his observation using the knowledge (of pronouns) he already had. However, the observation was accurate.

Parent Papers Set III
Cause and Effect, and Summarizing

____
Teacher's Name

Thinking and Language Skills #3

Developing thinking skills at home with children is a continuing and rewarding surprise, especially as the earlier skills of observing, comparing, classifying, and summarizing are practiced. this development also builds language skills.

Cause and Effect

A child gains confidence and feels powerful as he or she learns that one can make choices with a predictable effect. One can even make the choices according to the effect desired. A parent's job is to provide opportunities for the child to be a cause that the parent would like: such as choosing blue and red paint (or food coloring in water) to make purple -- rather than choosing to scream to get a cookie. Planting seeds, and making cookies (or other products) are other examples.

Talk about the weather in discussing cause and effect. What kind of clothes do we wear when it rains? when it is hot? How does this weather affect their play?

Planting seeds in a garden or indoors in a paper cup is a wonderful observation and cause-and-effect activity. If possible, first show the child a picture of beans or zinnias or another easy-to-plant item. Then let the child choose which to plant or even which seed packet to buy. Prepare the dirt together, read the seed packet out loud and let the child drop in seeds in several places. Many of these sprout within a week to ten days, and do so in nice rows that are noticeable if they are outside. Beans will have a blossom first and then a seed pod. When it is time to pick them, the child can help with "snapping" them for cooking. All this "effect" from the "cause" of planting the seeds can be discussed.

Notice if the child starts taking about expected effects: "I expect Susie will play with me today." -- Notice if he or she comments when things turn out differently than expected. Do children talk about how they will change things with toys or colors? Do children begin to build confidence in their choices and decisions as outcomes become predictable? Do children talk about some effects that outside causes have on them, such as: It was hot so I took off my sweater; It was snowy so I wore boots. Many children's books describe cause and effect, and their titles may summarize this.

Summarizing

The title of a story can be a summary of its meaning. It's fun to practice thinking up new titles for stories and this also builds language and stretches imagination. Titles or names of toys and games can also be used for summarizing examples.

It builds confidence and a sense of enjoyment for a child to think ahead and tell his or her own end of a story. Make a note of new titles or new endings children think up, and if they prefer them, try to use them again. In reading a story, stop at a different place and have the child make up what will happen next. You can "prime the pump" with suggestions for new titles, for example "Goldilocks Eats Cereal"? for The Three Bears, or "Little Red Riding Hood Goes for a Walk".

Older children become aware that larger concepts can be classified. The whole world or one room can be handled with North, South, East and West. Talk about the oceans on a globe and about seeing the ocean, a beach, or other water near you such as a river or lake. If it can be located on a map, talk about North, South, East and West and which way the water flows or the lake extends.

In reading stories or doing other activities, see if children start asking classifying questions, such as: What kind of ...? Are cows always black and white? Are dogs always large? Are fish always small? Does the child's conversation with friends begin to reflect categories? "I have five dresses. But I think Roger only has three dresses." (this from a girl, age three, with one sister who wore pants to preschool just like Roger did. She got the number and the category issues, but missed the gender issue!) Do children begin to see more variety within a category? For example, bread, milk, meat and fruit are all food, but are different "food groups".

Imagining

Many of the questions already listed at the beginning of the Parent Papers section on Thinking and Language skills build imagining and thinking skills. While it may seem that children don't need any help with this, extending their thinking and affirming and encouraging their imagination are always good.

More questions include:

- Ask what the child would do if he or she had three wishes?
- What would you make larger so it would be more exciting?
- What would you make go backwards in order to improve it?
- What would you make round so it would be more comfortable?
- What would your make smaller so it would be nicer?

These ideas and questions can go on and on with almost any two adjectives. Some of the answers will surprise you. Imagination is vital in the business and career world but it has to be developed. A link between childhood imagination and the business world can be seen (in hindsight) from this story by a seven year old:

> "Once there was a little tiger who lived in a house. He was playing on the front porch. Then he went in the house; and then the house began to fly." There was more to this story printed laboriously by a seven year old. The ECEAI researcher thought it was creative at the time. The writer of the story is the same child who as an adult, invented a new financial product for a banking corporation -- but one might never have linked these two examples of creativity except with the statement 'I've got an idea!'"

Parent Papers Set III--Cause and Effect, and Summarizing

Thinking and Language Skills #3

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The Early Childhood Education
Administration Institute Presents

PROGRAM ENRICHMENT PAPERS

For:
Nurseries, Head Start
Child-Care Centers
Family Day Care Mothers
Home Start and Home Visitors
Kindergarten and Primary Grades

These program enrichment papers cover similar topics from three different early childhood education curriculum approaches: the activity approach, the subject matter approach, and the process skills approach. Programs favoring one particular philosophy can use just that one of each series of three. Many teachers and care givers will want to use all three approaches. They can either be intermeshed in one day, or used on succeeding days to build a continuous flow in curriculum. The papers are meant to be removed individually and posted in the classroom so that the teacher can glance at them for reminders during actual teaching time. Visitors benefit too, from seeing an organized plan in action.

We have indicated a month that a sheet might be used. Programs in warmer or colder climates will want to rearrange these to suit their particular locale.

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These program enrichment papers cover similar topics from three different early childhood education curriculum approaches: the activity approach, the subject matter approach, and the process skills approach. Programs favoring one particular philosophy can use just that one of each series of three. Many teachers and care givers will want to use all three approaches. They can either be intermeshed in one day, or used on succeeding days to build a continuous flow in curriculum. The papers are meant to be removed individually and posted in the classroom so that the teacher can glance at them for reminders during actual teaching time. Visitors benefit too, from seeing an organized plan in action.

We have indicated a month that a sheet might be used. Programs in warmer or colder climates will want to rearrange these to suit their particular locale.

The three curriculum approaches selected can be differentiated in the following ways: the activity approach, the subject matter approach and the process skills approach. We at the Institute believe that every curriculum should develop the whole child, intellectually, socially and physically. However, the goal titles will vary depending on the philosophy of a particular school or curriculum. Also, the ideas highlighted during a particular activity will reflect the curriculum approach being used. It is our opinion that a combination of all three approaches yields a rich and interesting program that contributes to the growth and development of children. However, since parameters are sometimes set by those outside the classroom, we have separated activities to a degree, by three different approaches. A bibliography is offered for those who would like to learn more about a particular approach.

Activity Approach: This is the traditional nursery school, whole child development curriculum. Goals and objectives are often listed by holidays, seasons, or units. This approach provides a wide range of experiences that build self-confidence and competence. The materials for this approach allow children to see, feel, smell and act on them. The child is encouraged to learn through ALL his or her senses and the materials provide for this.

Subject Matter Approach: This approach can be identified by goals that are academic and the same as subjects the child will encounter later in schooling. Much of what is done in early childhood builds foundations for later learning in all approaches. By highlighting subject matter skills this approach sometimes provides fewer concrete experiences and more teacher directed learning than other approaches. A good teacher can be aware of this pitfall and guard against it. Goals in the subject matter curriculum are listed by subject matter such as language, math, science or social studies.

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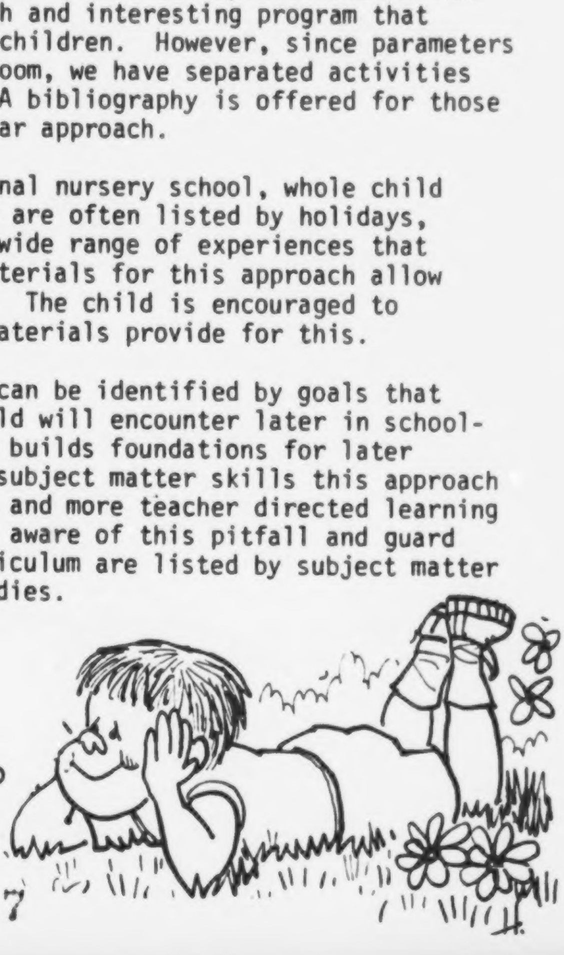


Process Skills Approach: The process approach to the curriculum has as its goals the enabling of the child to adapt to an ever-changing society. As units or goals in this curriculum approach, creative skills, interactive skills or cognitive skills are listed as headings. These skills or processes, include decision-making, cooperating, caring, communicating, creating, perceiving, observing, loving, knowing and problem-solving.

The child is active in experimentation, exploration, construction and selectivity. The child confidently acts on his or her environment and exhibits flexibility. The materials for this approach are much like those used in the activity approach, providing for visual discrimination, tactile sensitivity, perceptual motor development and eye-hand coordination. Large and small muscle equipment is utilized to provide a wide range of experiences for the young child.

A distinct sequence is listed in each day's activity. The Curriculum Approach tells which philosophy is being highlighted. The Goal identifies particular learnings that are emphasized. The Materials Needed section lists materials and some ordering information. An attempt is made to keep materials simple, inexpensive and already available. The Time Needed is always shown and can be expanded or continued for several days depending on the preference of the teacher and the age of the children. Reference is made to different times in the children's schedule, circle time, free choice time, outdoor time and so forth. However, these activities can be fitted into any schedule the program uses.

The How To Do It section gives a simple step-by-step approach to the activity. An effort is made to be brief and clear in this section. An effort has been made to have crafts and projects a child of three or four can do himself or herself. The process and fun of making the craft are more important than the finished product. A child who is expected just to put the finishing touches on a "pre-prepared" craft made from patterns, so "it will look nice for mother" receives the message that he or she is incompetent to do it alone. Since children may feel this way often anyway because most furniture at home is too big for them, and they don't always understand what is going on with adults, it is important that their children's group time not add to these feelings of incompetence. With thought and planning, crafts can be chosen that give even a two-year-old a feeling of success and competency. Twos make lovely collages and fingerpaint pictures, for instance.

The Evaluation section provides the teacher or care-giver with some evaluative information geared to the appropriateness of the age of the children, by describing observable signs of success. The Easier and Harder Ideas gives adaptations of the activity or one like it for younger children in #1 and for older or more able children in #2. It also encourages teachers and children to adapt enrichment program activities and to create new ones themselves. The Send Home Ideas section allows for the parent to be included as an active partner in his or her child's learning.

The Program Enrichment Paper(s) in use for a particular day can be detached from the packet and posted in the classroom. Teachers can jot notes about the activity, the materials or the children on the reverse side, and keep these in a folder as a resource.

Colors and Shapes

Curriculum Approach: Activity

Goal: To practice identifying colors and shapes.

Materials Needed: Colored paper, magazine pictures, paint, glue, paper, potato halves, clay, lamp for shadow shapes.

Time Needed: 5-10 minutes for several days.

How to Do It:
1. Talk about "green" or "red" for several days and ask the children to point to everything in the room that is green. Let the children take turns picking a new color to look for.

2. Give a child a small piece of colored paper. Ask him or her to run to find something that matches the color. Several children can play "color run" at once, indoors or out.

3. Make a shape collage for one shape such as a circle, square or triangle. Using colored paper in colors which you have used already, or using magazine pictures, let the children choose matching shapes. Glue them on paper. Select another shape another day to make a shape collage.

4. Cut potato halves in the shape of a square, circle, or triangle and do vegetable stamp printing in the "color of the day" on the paper. The shapes can also be cut onto the flat surface of the potato as a raised shape.

5. Use a lamp to make hand shadows in shapes on the wall. Ask the children to identify the shapes you have already practiced.

Age: 1,2,3,4,5

Evaluation: Can the children name three colors? three shapes?

Easier and Harder Ideas:
1. A younger child can wind colored yarn or put rubber bands around nails on a design board. To make this, hammer nails into scrapboard or push nails into pieces of styrofoam. The nails can be placed to form the shapes of the week.

2. Older children can make clay beads of different shapes and colors. Make a hole in them with a toothpick, let dry, and string into bracelets and necklaces. The children will proudly wear them.

Send Home Ideas:
Suggest that parents make puzzles at home by gluing pictures on cardboard and then cutting them into shapes. Store the finished puzzle in an envelope.

Color Jars

Curriculum Approach: Process

Goal: To learn more about colors and light. To practice observation skills.

Materials Needed: Clean baby food jars or other small jars with lids, food coloring, water, white styrofoam egg cartons.

Time Needed:
10 to 15 minutes

How to Do It:
1. Fill the jars with water, almost to the top. Add 1 or 2 drops of food coloring to one jar. Stir and put on the lid. Make more color jars with other colors.

2. Stack the color jars on a sunny window sill and talk about the colored light that streams into the room. Invite the children to look through the jars with one eye and tell what they see. Talk about what happens when each eye looks through a different color.

3. Talk about what happens when you or a child looks through 2 or 3 jars in a row.

4. Prepare the colored water in the primary colors of red, yellow, blue. With eye droppers, straws, or teaspoons, let the children put these colors in egg carton openings. Then make secondary colors of green, orange, and purple by mixing blue and yellow, red and yellow, and blue and red. Observe the change.

Age: 3,4,5

Evaluation: Do the children enjoy looking through the color jars?

Easier and Harder Ideas:
1. Younger children can paint on newspapers with the colored water. They can fill in shapes also.

2. Older children can enjoy the unique shapes that fingerprints make. Make a fingerprint, then draw picture around it, such as a mouse, cat or snowman.

Send Home Ideas:
Suggest to parents to place 1,2, or 3 jars of colored water on the window sill and talk about the colors in the room, and cause and effect.

Rainbows

Curriculum Approach: Subject Matter

Goal: To understand something about the principles that make rainbows. Explain that water or prisms can change light into colors.

Materials Needed: Colored paper, scissors, glue or paste, hose for water outside.

Time Needed: 10-15 minutes

How to Do It:
1. Have the children cut out semi-circles of colored paper, each slightly larger than the last. Paste them one on top of the next, to make a rainbow. Talk about the colors and shapes.

2. Talk about rainbows, the different colors in the rainbow, and the order they always come in.

3. Outside, make a real rainbow by using the hose to shoot a fine spray of water into the sun. Talk about the sun reflecting into the waterdrops or raindrops to make rainbow colors.

4. Inside, use a prism to show how white light breaks down into the colors of the rainbow. Ask if the colors are in the same order as the rainbow from the hose spray.

Age: 4,5,6

Evaluation: Did the children see a relationship between the colors in their rainbows, in the hose spray, and from the prism?

Easier and Harder Ideas:
1. Younger children can color a rainbow with crayons or markers.

2. Older children can learn more about shapes by drawing lines on a piece of construction paper to make triangles and squares, cut them out and play with them to make building blocks or puzzle pieces. This develops their sense of spatial relationships. (An adult can help a younger child with drawing lines or cutting this tanagram.)

Send Home Ideas:
Ask parents to talk with their child about rainbows and look for them after a rain, in a sprinkler spray outside, or in patterns in the home.

Measuring and Weighing

Curriculum Approach: Activity

Goal: To learn more about ourselves as people and to build self-esteem.

Materials Needed: Tape measure or yard stick, paper and markers, ingredients for a simple recipe such as corn bread or lemonade.

Time Needed: 20-30 minutes.

How to Do It:
1. Measure the height and weight of all the children (have a list of the children with you to check off each one).

2. Hang a chart on the wall with a record of each child's height and weight and a picture of the child. At the end of the school year do this again to show the children how they've grown.

3. Trace around the childrens' hands and feet with marking pens, compare them to a new set made later or at the end of the year. Have they grown? Trace around the whole child on big pieces of paper. Talk about how big they are. Compare with drawings later. Measure the drawing with a yard stick or tape measure.

4. For more practice measuring, have the children help you follow a recipe producing lemonade, or cornbread, or whatever you choose.

Age: 3, 4, 5

Evaluation: Do children understand that they can be measured?

Easier and Harder Ideas:
1. Younger children can weigh other things on a bathroom scale or postal scale.

2. Older children can measure things on a metric scale and compare. They can learn more about the metric system.

Send Home Ideas:
Suggest to parents that their child help weigh and measure family members (who are willing). Perhaps, they can stand against a flat wall and measure down the wall.

Balancing and Comparing

Curriculum Approach: Process

Goal: To practice observation, sequencing, and estimation.

Materials Needed: Balancing scale, various paired objects, 8 small identical jars/cans/boxes, 3 varied sizes of balls and sticks.

Time Needed: 10-15 minutes.

How to Do It:

1. Help the children use balances for simple comparisons. Is the bigger object always heavier?

2. Collect pairs of various objects and invite the children to guess/estimate which will be heavier. Ask the children to collect the pairs.

3. Collect 8 identical boxes or small cans or jars. Fill 2 to the top, with sand or rice or beans etc. Fill 2 half-way, fill 2 one quarter of the way, and leave 2 empty. Ask the children to estimate which will be heavier. Mix them up and ask the children to match up the pairs by lifting them to judge their weight.

4. Collect a sequence of objects like 3 balls or 3 sticks of varying lengths. Have the children put them in order, using words like "longer", "shorter", "biggest".

Age: 4,5,6

Evaluation: Did the children estimate at least some of the heavier items correctly?

Easier and Harder Ideas:

1. A younger child can practice measuring when some food items are being prepared.

2. An older child can make a simple mobile, observing that different items must be balanced against each other to make the mobile hang straight. (Start with the bottom balance stick or wire and work up to the higher connections.)

Send Home Ideas:

Encourage parents to let their children practice measuring in the kitchen and in the bathtub, with measuring cups or small paper cups. Counting and then feeling the weight of pennies in paper cups in also a possibility.

Water and Sand

Curriculum Approach: Subject Matter

Goal: To understand that many things can be measured.

Materials Needed: Water table or large basins containing measuring cups, funnels; sand box or sand containers, calendar, clock, thermometer

Time Needed: 10-15 minutes.

How to Do It:

1. Invite the children to measure water in measuring cups in a water table or using aluminum roaster pans or similar containers. Talk about one cup and one cup making two cups.

2. Talk about "empty", "half-full", and how a full cup weighs more than an empty cup. Ask which is heavier or lighter?

3. Ask how many small cups can you fill by pouring water out of a larger cup?

4. Try all these ideas with sand.

5. Talk about other measurements such as calendars, clocks to measure time, and thermometers to measure temperature.

Age: 3,4,5

Evaluation:

Easier and Harder Ideas:

1. Younger children can talk about why we have standard measures rather than a "teacher foot" or a "Charlie foot."

2. With older children make a number line on the floor with duct tape or heavy plastic tape. Write the numbers with a permanent marker. Invite the children to walk it. Add and subtract on it.

Send Home Ideas:

Encourage parents to read or tell their children a story about measuring such as "How Big is a Foot" by Rolf Miller.

Month: September Thinking Skills: Comparing · Day: 3A Language Development · Program Enrichment Papers

Touch, Sight, Sound, Smell, and Taste

Curriculum Approach: Activity

Goal: To practice learning by the senses.

Materials Needed: Box that children can't see into but can reach into; collection of safe objects that can be identified easily by touch with different shapes and textures (bell, rock, penny, paper cup etc).

Time Needed: 15 to 20 minutes over several days

How to Do It:

1. Use a feel box and invite the children to reach in and describe an object, without looking BEFORE naming it. Is it heavy? What is its shape? Texture? Talk about whether we need to see objects to use our sense of touch.

2. Ask the child to describe the object after he or she can see it.

3. Cut up matching pieces of apples and potatoes. Invite the children to identify them by taste (with closed eyes). Do the same with salt and sugar with eyes open.

4. Practice sounds by practicing listening. Give 3 commands in a row to be followed such as: go around a tree, behind the swing, and over the walk.

5. Stretch rubber bands over a cake pan to make a guitar. Make several guitars and listen to the music.

6. Use loose potpourri and small squares of cloth to make sackets to smell. (Do this again in the spring for Mother's Day).

7. Use all 5 senses by making popcorn. Can the children hear it? smell it? taste it? Do they have to see it and touch it to know what it is?

Age: 3, 4, 5

Evaluation: Do children show in their conversation that they are using more senses to identify things?

Easier and Harder Ideas:

1. Collect flat objects (leaf, sandpaper, key, bark) and invite younger children to make a rubbing with white paper over them, using the sides of crayons. Do rough or smooth objects make the best rubbings?

2. An older child can play "blind man's bluff" with a scarf tied loosely over his or her eyes. Lead the child on a safe but complicated journey to feel a cold window, a bathroom sink, a towel. Ask him or her to describe the item and give its name.

Send Home Ideas:

Ask parents to invite children to guess what they are cooking by the smell, or to name a new food by the taste (salty, crunchy, etc.).

What's Missing?

Curriculum Approach: Process

Goal: To develop observation skills and listening skills.

Materials Needed: 4-8 simple objects, 8 identical containers, cereal, rice, water, marbles or pebbles, a zipper, jar with lid.

Time Needed: 10-15 minutes.

How to Do It:
1. Gather 3 or 4 simple objects on a tray. Invite the children to look them over, then close their eyes. Remove one object and ask which one you took away. Add more objects as the children improve.

2. Using 8 identical containers, fill 2 with rice, 2 with cereal, 2 with water, and 2 with marbles or pebbles. Ask the children to identify sounds that are the same or different by shaking and listening. Next compare weights.

3. Identify and describe other sounds with your eyes closed. Try crumpling paper, zipping a zipper, screwing a lid on a jar. Talk about soft, sharp, loud, etc.

4. Play "telephone" with children by whispering in the ear of the first child in a circle. Let them pass it around and see what it sounds like when it gets all the way around. Start with 5 or 6 children. What's missing? What has been added?

Age: 3, 4, 5

Evaluation: Do the children get better at describing sights and sounds? Do they notice what's missing?

Easier and Harder Ideas:
1. Younger children can play telephone with the paper cup telephone you make in Day 3-C.

2. Older children can play the "what's missing" object game with 10-20 objects.

Send Home Ideas:
Encourage parents to play "what's missing" and "take away" games at home, perhaps while setting the table.

Thinking Skills:
  Comparing
  Categorizing

Sound and Color, Smell and Taste

Curriculum Approach: Subject Matter

Goal: To become aware of some physiological processes and to develop vocabulary.

Materials Needed: Paper cups, a timer, magazine pictures, string, spices, lemon slices, apple slices, raisins, sugar, quinine water. Be sure to note food allergies while planning this.

Time Needed: 10-15 minutes.

How to Do It:

1. Talk about sounds we hear. Set a timer for 3-5 minutes and hide it. Have the children try to find it by listening to its ticking.

2. Make play telephones by poking tiny holes in the bottoms of 2 paper cups, and putting a string between them. Knot the string on each end, inside the cups to hold it in place. These really work. Use words to describe how it sounds.

3. Sort things by "smells I like" and "smells I don't like" on a collage. Use magazine pictures of things with identifiable odors or use the real item such as fresh-cut grass, honeysuckle, saw dust, cinnamon, nutmeg, orange or lemon. Talk about the colors.

4. Bring in small food samples with characteristic tastes: sugar, apple, raisins for sweet; lemon for sour; quinine water for bitter. Taste these and talk about the taste buds on different parts of your tongue. Hold your nose and see if that affects the taste. Talk about the colors of the foods.

Age: 3,4,5,6

Evaluation:

Did the children understand that there are reasons for things tasting or smelling differently? Reasons for listening?

Easier and Harder Ideas:

1. Ask younger children to practice observation skills by playing "color run". Give them colored pieces of paper and have them run to find matching objects in the classroom.

2. Older children can learn more about taste buds for the four basic tastes: sweet buds on the tip of your tongue; salty on the tip and sides of your tongue; sour and bitter taste buds on the sides and roof of your mouth. Roll the food around in your mouth to discover these. Talk about whether the foods are sweet, sour, spicy, bland, bitter, crispy, soft, hard, smelly, or in particular shapes.

Send Home Ideas:

Invite parents to try more foods with their children with their eyes closed and put them in these categories: sweet, salty, sour, and bitter. (yogurt, honey, pretzels, and pickles are good examples).

The Outside of Our Body

Curriculum Approach: Activity

Goal: To increase vocabulary and practice large muscle coordination.

Materials Needed: Large rolls of paper, felt or construction paper body parts, scissors, crayons, a tall mirror.

Time Needed: 20 minutes.

How to Do It:
1. Talk to the children about individual body parts and identify them using felt pieces on a flannel board or construction paper pre-cut pieces. Name the parts. Talk about what we use them for: hands for holding, feet for walking, eyes, ears, knees, elbows, wrists, and more.

2. Make life-size puppets by rolling out rolls of paper on the floor and tracing around the children. This gives them life-size pictures of themselves. Add clothing, hair, eyes and other details and color them in. Show the children how to use the sides of the crayons to color a large area.

3. Cut up the life-sized pictures to make a giant puzzle, later. Arms, legs, and heads can be reattached with paper fasteners and will move.

4. Practice moving the real body parts in different ways at music time; stretch, jump, twist, waddle, turn, hang limp or be a rag doll. Play "Simon Says" or "Do the Hokey Pokey" and sing. Invite the children to look in the mirror while moving.

5. Make faces in a mirror looking happy, sad, laughing, or crying.

Age: 2,3,4,5

Evaluation: Do the children know the names of more body parts than before?

Easier and Harder Ideas:
1. Talk about how children have the same body parts as adults, but they are different. In what ways? (size, strength, beards, etc.) Have the children close their eyes and raise a hand or lift a leg. Talk about how we know what our bodies are doing without even looking. Or you move a child's hand or leg and ask him or her what you did. (Comment that the child knows, even though she or he had closed eyes.)

2. With older children, talk about how animals have many of the same body parts as other animals but they look different. Sometimes they function differently. Use pictures of animals to add to the discussion and vocabulary building.

Send Home Ideas:
Suggest that parents talk more with their children about the body parts of animals and how ears, nose, teeth, legs and skin are different. Ask parents to take a walk or go to a zoo and look at real animals or pets.

Are We All the Same or Different?

Curriculum Approach: Process

Goal: To develop observation and comparing skills.

Materials Needed: Paper plates, black and white newspaper comics, dress-up clothes.

Time Needed: 10-15 minutes.

How to Do It:
1. Talk about similarities and differences with the children. Everyone has two eyes and hair. Some have brown eyes and some blue eyes. Some have curly hair and some have straight hair.

2. Try on wigs and dress-up clothes and imagine what it would be like to be somebody else for a while.

3. Use paper plates and make faces cutting and pasting the features: eyes, hair, ears, nose, mouth.

4. Photocopy simple black and white cartoons with boys and girls or draw your own. Have the children color them to match the clothes they are wearing that day. Invite them to scribble in what the people are saying.

Age: 3,4,5

Evaluation: Do the children identify two or three things that are the same? Different?

Easier and Harder Ideas:
1. Younger children could observe differences in magazine pictures of people.

2. With older children, you can look at pictures of children in other lands. What is the same (hair, faces, feet, etc.)? What is different?

Send Home Ideas:
Ask parents to encourage children to observe the different colors of hair and eyes of family members. What is the same? (two feet, eyes, ears, hands, etc.)

Skin and Fingerprints

Curriculum Approach: Subject Matter/Science

Goal: To begin learning about the physiology of the body. To practice observation skills.

Materials Needed: Magnifying glasses, ink pads, paper.

Time Needed: 10 to 15 minutes

How to Do It:

1. Have the children examine their skin under a magnifying glass.

2. Talk about what skin does: it's waterproof, helps prevent injury, gives us a sense of touch, contains sweat glands, helps control body temperature, and holds in all of the internal parts of the body.

3. Look at the "fingerprint area" of fingers under a magnifying glass. Talk about the swirls and whorls. Now look at two children's fingerprints under one magnifying glass. How are they different? Explain that each person's pattern is unique.

4. Draw the outline of each child's hand on paper and use a stamp pad to help the children put their fingerprints on it. Compare them with other hand prints.

Age: 4,5

Evaluation: Do the children notice the differences between at least two of the fingerprints?

Easier and Harder Ideas:

1. A younger child can color in an outline drawing around their hand. Talk about the parts of the hand: fingernails, palms, fingers, knuckles, and the wrist. Save this hand (and foot) drawing and compare them with a set made at the end of the year.

2. An older child can learn more about DNA and the patterns it creates. Find matches and non-matches for DNA patterns. [-] or [=] for example.

Send Home Ideas:

Ask parents to let children look at the hands of all the people in the family. Talk about similarities and differences.

The Inside of Our Body

Curriculum Approach: Activity

Goal: To understand that the insides of our bodies have important parts that make us healthy.

Materials Needed: Sugar cubes, bowl of warm water.

Time Needed: 5-10 minutes.

How to Do It:
1. Talk about digestion and how when our mouths take in food, our bodies need to process the food so we can use it. Our stomach and intestines do this work for us.

2. Dissolve a sugar cube in warm water to show what happens to food in our stomachs.

3. Tell the children that we need both food and water to be healthy. We can get water from drinking water, but also from juices, fruits, and other foods. Ask them to name other food or drinks.

4. Ask the children to guess which foods and liquids make us healthy.

Age: 4,5,6

Evaluation: Did the children notice that the sugar cube dissolved in the water?

Easier and Harder Ideas:
1. Younger children can feel their bodies and tell which parts are hard (bones) and which are soft (other organs).

2. Older children can look up pictures in an encyclopedia or other books that show the digestive system and identify the parts of the system.

Send Home Ideas:
Ask parents to talk about healthy foods with their children and identify which foods we get fluids and water from.

Skeletons, Joints, and Circulation

Curriculum Approach: Subject Matter

Goal: To understand more about the skeleton and the rest of the respiratory and circulatory systems.

Materials Needed: Stethoscope if possible, bulb aspirator, bowl of water, red food coloring.

Time Needed: 5-10 minutes.

How to Do It:

1. Talk about the bones inside our bodies holding us up and protecting the soft organs inside, like the stomach.

2. Ask the children to feel their own bones and count their ribs.

3. Make construction paper skeletons and attach the joints with paper fasterners that will allow them to move.

4. Talk about oxygen being carried from our lungs to the other parts of the body through the heart, arteries, and veins. Squeeze your fist to imitate a pulsing heart. Can the children feel their own hearts beating?

5. Use a stethoscope to let the children listen to their hearts after resting, and then after running and jumping.

Age: 4,5,6

Evaluation: Did the children enjoy counting their ribs and listening to their hearts? Did the children see that it's fun to learn new things?

Easier and Harder Ideas:

1. Younger children can look at a bowl of red-colored water when you talk about blood in the arteries and veins. Use an aspirator bulb to show the heart pumping action in the bowl of water.

2. An older child can learn that while many animals have their skeletons on the inside, some have skeletons on the outside, such as the crab and the lobster. Some have no skeletons at all, such as the snail and worms.

Send Home Ideas:

Ask parents to talk about blood in the veins, the next time their child needs a band-aid for a cut. Suggest that they talk about, or play, doctor's office and practice scribbling prescriptions on a pad of paper with their child.

Muscles Make Us Strong

Curriculum Approach: Process

Goal: To develop observation skills and practice understanding cause and effect.

Materials Needed: None.

Time Needed: 5-10 minutes.

How to Do It:

1. Talk about muscles helping us move and about muscles being attached to our bones.

2. Ask the children to tense up their muscles and walk like robots. Observe how it feels and how their arms and legs move. What caused this?

3. Ask the children to relax their muscles and be like a floppy rag doll. How does this feel? What caused this?

4. Talk about muscles helping our coordination. Practice walking on the balance beam.

Age: 3,4,5,6

Evaluation: Did the children understand that muscles help their bones to move? Did the children ask questions?

Easier and Harder Ideas:

1. A younger child can practice lifting heavy and light things. Talk about how this uses his or her muscles.

2. An older child can look up the skeletal-musculatory system in an encyclopedia and learn more about how they connect. Which muscles perform which tasks?

Send Home Ideas:

Ask parents to point out muscles people use. Family members can clench their arm muscles to show that different people have different size muscles.

Bathe a Doll Day

Curriculum Approach: Activity

Goal: To learn about everyday hygiene, eating healthy foods, and exercise.

Materials Needed: Washable dolls, diluted liquid soap or shampoo, water table or dishpan with water, snack foods from all five food groups.

Time Needed: 10 to 15 minutes

How to Do It:

1. Invite boys and girls to help give some washable dolls a bath in the water table or in a dishpan. Use diluted shampoo or liquid soap.

2. Wash hair, fingernails, etc. Do a thorough job. Dry the dolls and dress them in clean clothes afterwards.

3. At snack time have a snack that includes something from all five food groups (e.g. crackers, cheese or milk, peanut butter, apple slice, and acarrot stick). Talk about what everybody had for breakfast? for dinner?

4. Set up an exercise course around the room. Use pictures of people doing exercises or demonstrate them yourself. Use the balance beam, old tires, and other items.

Age: 4,5,6

Evaluation: Did the children enjoy washing the dolls and trying the exercises? Did they try at least three of the food groups?

Easier and Harder Ideas:

1. A younger child can make a collage of pictures of foods from the five food groups.

2. Older children can learn more about vitamins and minerals and which ones are in which food groups.

Send Home Ideas:

Ask parents to talk about hygiene and health the next time they take their child to a restaurant, doctor's office or dentist's office. At a restaurant note the food preparation area. Suggest they encourage their children to practice scribbling menus. They can also scribble doctor or dentist appointments on the calendar. Talk about how we use writing and reading in real life.

Why Keep Dirt Off Our Hands?

Curriculum Approach: Process

Goal: To understand more about health and how we can keep ourselves healthy. To practice observation and cause and effect.

Materials Needed: Soap and water, toy medical kit, stethoscope, nurse and doctor hats (homemade?).

Time Needed: 5-10 minutes

How to Do It:

1. Talk about the importance of washing our hands and brushing our teeth, tasks which we do frequently.

2. Ask the children to show you the proper way to wash and rinse their hands. This is good to do right after they've finished painting.

3. Practice brushing teeth with a tooth brush on the dolls or on a dental model. Why do we want to get food off our teeth? Dirt off our hands? Especially before meals?

4. Emphasize health and nutrition rather than sickness. Talk about "well" visits to doctors and dentists so they can help us take care of our bodies. This should become a routine non-threatening experience. Play doctor with a medical kit and stethoscope.

5. Act out a "typical" well visit to a doctor or dentist. Make sure the group is non-sexist with some girls as doctors and some boys as nurses.

Age: 3,4,5,6

Evaluation: Did the children understand that we can see our doctors and dentists for check-ups, so that they can watch us grow, and we can help keep ourselves healthy?

Easier and Harder Ideas:

1. Younger children can practice washing their own hands or a doll's hands.

2. Older children can look at mouth and teeth pictures in an encyclopedia or science book and learn more.

Send Home Ideas:

Ask parents to talk to children about check-ups at the doctor's office, so they can watch us grow. Talk with their child about the child's last check-up and what the doctor said or did. Ask their child what things did the doctor or the secretary write down? Remind parents to notice this "real life" writing next time.

Get Out the Stethoscope

Curriculum Approach: Subject Matter

Goal: To practice observation and cause and effect, and to understand beginning physiology.

Materials Needed: A stethoscope

Time Needed: 10 minutes

How to Do It:

1. Tell children we need to exercise to stay healthy. Muscles we don't use won't be strong when we need them.

2. Do some aerobic exercises with the children such as jumping jacks.

3. Using the stethoscope, listen to heart rates before and after exercising. Count them if you can.

4. Talk about everyone exercising. Parents need to also. What can parents do? Run, walk, climb stairs, ride bikes. What else?

Age: 4,5,6

Evaluation: Did the children notice a difference in their heart rates before and after exercising?

Easier and Harder Ideas:

1. Younger children can jump up and down in one area and listen to their hearts.

2. Older children can learn more about pulse rates and exercise.

Send Home Ideas:

Ask parents to take children to see an exercise studio, gym, or outdoor exercise course.

Pre-Social Studies
Pre-Literacy

"Play Office Worker, Construction Worker, Fire Fighter and Sales Person"

CURRICULUM APPROACH:
Activity

GOAL:
To understand more about real work and the writing activities that go with it.

MATERIALS NEEDED:
Old business cards, stationery, pads and pencils, paper, shopping bags, toy cash register (s), red construction paper 11x17.

TIME NEEDED:
15-20 minutes on several days.

HOW TO DO IT:

1) Set up an office in the dramatic play corner, with old business cards, a toy phone with pads and pencils, toy coffee pot, an old computer or typewriter, and "business looking" stationery. Talk about kinds of word use in an office and the writing and reading people do there. Take a role yourself in the "office."

2) Play store with children wearing the dress up clothes. It can be a toy store, grocery store, clothing store or other store the children decide upon. Toy cash register and shopping carts (or baby buggies) help, but are not required. Add empty paper shopping bags. Talk about writing sales checks and sales receipts.

3) With the blocks design and construct big buildings and doll furniture. Talk about the carpenter, the welder, the architect and the engineer.

4) Visit a firehouse or ask a fireman or woman to visit the class. Later make fire fighter hats from oblong 11x17 pieces of red construction paper with a 61/2" and hole cut in one end. Use the cut out piece as an inset hat crown. Round the corners on the "hat".

AGE
3, 4, 5, 6, years

EVALUATION:
Did the children understand more about adult work?

EASIER & HARDER IDEAS

1) A younger child can make a family tree with a magazine or catalog pictures cut out to represent parents, siblings and other relatives. Ask the children if they are the oldest, youngest, in the middle or the only boy or girl. Talk about other relatives such as aunts and uncles, cousins, and grand parents who live nearby or far away. Talk about special grown-ups with children from single parent families.

2) Older children can practice writing or scribbling notes for more of the other jobs in the classroom and "read" them back to you. Tell them "We learn to do jobs as we grow up and go to school."

SEND HOME IDEAS:

Invite parents to talk about the kinds of work mom and dad do, at home or at work. Perhaps the children can visit the work. Talk about jobs neighbors and other relatives do.

Pre-Social Studies
Pre-Literacy

We Learn to Do These Jobs as We Grow Up and Go to School

CURRICULUM APPROACH:
Process Approach

GOAL:
To practice observation, cause and effect, predicting and estimating skills.

MATERIALS NEEDED:
Shopping lists, register tapes, receipts, seed packets and maps for the dramatic play area.

TIME NEEDED:
15 minutes.

HOW TO DO IT:

1) Talk and think about all the people who work to make eating a meal possible: farmers, truck drivers, grocery store workers, shoppers, cooks and more. Act out some of these in a role play, in the dramatic play area or with blocks. Ask the children to observe and tell about more jobs such as: waiters, waitresses, people who make dishes and silverware, etc.

2) Talk about and think about all the people who work outdoors everyday: gardeners, forest rangers, mailpersons are a few. Play "Playground Clean-up Workers" as a role playing activity.

3) Ask the children what these people need to write and read to do these jobs? Shoppers need shopping lists, cooks need recipes, truck drivers need maps, farmers need seed packets. Put some of these and writing tools in the dramatic play corner. Talk about predicting and estimating. What do these workers need to predict? (How long it will take to grow the food? To drive it to the store in a truck?) Practice estimating these times.

4) Ask children what do outdoor workers wear in the summer? In the winter? Why?

AGE:
4, 5, 6 years

EVALUATION:
Do children notice more kinds of workers in the community?

EASIER & HARDER IDEAS:

1) A younger child can make a "shopping list" by pasting food labels or pictures on a piece of card board. He or she can even scribble beneath the picture for the "list."

2) An older child can dictate quite a detailed shopping list for an elaborate holiday meal, such as Thanksgiving.

SEND HOME IDEAS:

Suggest that parents involve their child more in the food shopping - perhaps dictating part of the grocery list ahead of time, helping to select items from it at the store, and helping to put them away at home.

Pre-Social Studies

Waiting for the Dentist

CURRICULUM APPROACH:
Subject Matter

GOAL:
To understand the community workers around us.

MATERIALS NEEDED:
Old magazines paper, pencils, pads, play money and pretend "checks," pictures or models of teeth, doctor's mask, flash light or pen light, plastic gloves, dental floss, appointment calendar, hand mirror, clip board with "sign-in sheet".

TIME NEEDED:
15-20 minutes, free play time.

HOW TO DO:

1) Set up a dentist's office in the dramatic play area. Include a doctor's mask, flash light or pen light, plastic gloves, dental floss, assorted magazines, paper, pencils and an appointment calendar. A hand mirror and a clip board are also good props. Talk about why we go to the dentist's office and the jobs that are there: Dentist, nurse, receptionist, hygienist and customer/patient.

2) Talk about sitting in the dentists chair, wearing a "bib" and learning more about tooth brushes, tooth paste and model teeth. With a picture of teeth practice counting the teeth.

3) Add a nurse's hat and a doctor's coat to the play area. Add play money, a sign-in sheet, and blank "checks" and a pad to write out prescriptions. Invite the children to take the different roles and to look at their teeth in the hand mirror. (These are harder to count!) Pay for the dentist's visit with the play money.

4) Post "office hours" and practice making and keeping "appointments." Practice waiting your turn. Talk about good health, good grooming, care of your teeth, and courtesy in waiting.

AGE:
3, 4, 5, 6, 7 years

EVALUATION:
Did the children understand that visiting the dentist can be a routine thing and you always learn new things there?

EASIER AND HARDER IDEAS:

1) Younger children can use dolls for customers. The tooth brushes should only be used on the dolls, of course.

2) Older children would enjoy other career themes in the dramatic play area with literacy materials related to them. A post office can have an adding machine, envelopes, paper, postcards, pens, and pencils, address books, telephone books, poster of area zip codes, rubber stamps, mail box, cubby holes, and a mail-carrier. A bank can have pads of paper, desk accessories, stapler, posters, advertising interest rates, play telephone and telephone books, pretend checks, deposit and withdrawal forms, play money and a cash register. Talk about why we use these different props and literacy materials can be used easily.

All Kinds of Transportation

CURRICULUM APPROACH:
Activity

GOAL:
To learn more about all kinds of transportation.

MATERIALS NEEDED:
Tricycles, wagons, cardboard street signs that say STOP, SCHOOL ZONE, and more.

TIME NEEDED:
15-20 minutes of outdoor time.

HOW TO DO IT:

1) Talk about the "rules of the road" in traffic. All the vehicles we use have wheels to make moving things and people easier.

   Invite some of the children to be police officers, truck drivers, taxi drivers, car pool drivers, delivery truck drivers, bus drivers and so forth. Tape signs on the tricycles that say "Taxi" or "Mail" or "UPS." Give the drivers, driver's licenses. Let the police officer give tickets for unsafe driving.

2) Talk to the children about the way people do their jobs with cars and trucks.

3) How many different kinds of trucks can the children name? Tow truck, dump truck, cement mixer, car carrier, moving van, steam shovel, delivery truck and more. Name the parts of the truck: cab, trailer, wheels, axle, etc.

EVALUATION:
Did the children understand that there are "rules of the road" in traffic?

EASIER & HARDER IDEAS:

1) Younger children can play train with 3 large boxes. Decorate them as engine, passenger car, and caboose. Let the children choose what the cars should be.

2) Older children can talk about visits to the following (or visit them): car wash, service or gas station, train or bus station, bike shop.

SEND HOME IDEAS:

Suggest to parents that they talk about the rules of driving when they are in the car together. Tell why there are white and yellow lines on the road, and what the signs say and mean, for instance.

Month: November Day #IIB Program Enrichment Papers
Pre-Social Studies

How Did People Get Around?

CURRICULUM APPROACH:
Process approach

GOAL:
To build observation skills and understand cause and effect.

MATERIALS NEEDED:
Toy horse(s) or cow(s) and 2, 4, or 6 sticks or twigs. Paper or material to make a blanket for a travois.

TIME NEEDED:
15-20 minutes.

HOW TO DO IT:

1) Talk about how before cars and trains were invented, people got around only by walking. Then they used strong, easily tamed animals to help with their work getting around. They used horses, camels, mules, oxen, huskies (dogs), elephants and other animals over the years. Animals could pull a sledge (like a snow sledge), a cart, a stage coach, or a travois. The native Americans made a travois from two sticks dragging behind a horse, with the cargo fastened between them.

2) Using toy horses and cows use some twigs or sticks and cloth or paper to make a travois to carry things. Notice and talk about whether it will go as fast as a wagon with wheels.

3) Describe a vehicle to children and see if they can guess what you are describing. For example "What is a vehicle that has 2 (or 3) wheels and no motor? You pedal it to make it go." (A bicycle or tricycle.)

4) Talk about automobiles and set up a pretend service (gas) station with pretend gas pumps, air and water hoses, mechanical repair areas, cash register and receipt pads and pencils. Ask the children to tell you why they might go to a service station? Did the people need them in the old days with animal transportation? Why not?

EVALUATION:
Did the children understand that there are many ways to get around?

EASIER AND HARDER:
1) Younger children on tricycles can be customers at the service station.
2) Older children can look up all the ways animals used to carry things: Camel saddles, an elephant's howdah, and mule and horse carts for example.

Month: November Day #IIC Program Enrichment Papers
Pre-Science
Pre-Social Studies

Boats and Planes: Paddles, Sails and Motors

CURRICULUM APPROACH:
Subject matter approach

MATERIALS NEEDED:
Margarine tubs, nutshells, folded paper, and pipe cleaners for boats, large box for stage coach, elongated balloons.

TIME NEEDED:
15-20 minutes, 2 or 3 days.

GOAL:
To learn more about transportation today and long ago.

HOW TO DO IT:

1) Invite the children to make sail boats to try out in the water table or in dish pans of water. Use the margarine tubs and nutshells as boats with masts of pipe cleaners, and sails made of paper.

2) Talk about which types of boats can travel on lakes and small rivers? Which boats cross the ocean? Which ones are paddled? Which use sails or motors?

3) Another day make canoes. Cut the 2 sides from construction paper. With a hole punch, punch holes along the bottom and lace the 2 sides together with yarn or shoe laces. Talk about the ways Native Americans make canoes of bark, with hollowed-out trees, or as rafts, (don't put the paper canoes in the water.)

4) Talk about planes and rockets. How much faster is it to fly to a far away city than to drive? Blow up the long balloons outside, and let them loose. What propels them? Talk about air propelling rockets and airplanes (this is hard to believe).

EVALUATION:
Did the children understand that there are many ways to be in motion besides walking?

EASIER & HARDER IDEAS:

1) Younger children can play stage coach in the large box. Make reins so some children can be the horses.

2) Older children can make a map with a big piece of cardboard. Draw roads, train tracks, and airport runways. Suggest that the children play with small transportation toys on this simple map.

SEND HOME IDEAS:

Suggest to parents that they show their child a local map and find where they live. make a map of your home or the child's room, showing windows and doors. Place the furniture in the room, or in new places, and talk about it.

Month: November Day #IIIA Program Enrichment Papers
Thanksgiving Unit

Colonial America

CURRICULUM APPROACH:
Activity approach

GOAL:
To understand that people in Colonial America had to do things differently and that they invited the Native Americans to their Thanksgiving celebration.

MATERIALS NEEDED:
Squares of material 12"x18" (torn from sheets or other materials) permanent colored markers, portable sewing machine brought in, paper grocery bags, scissors.

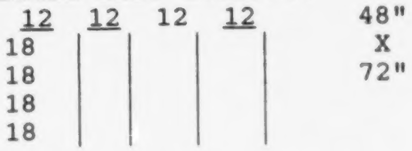
TIME NEEDED:
1 Hour

HOW TO DO IT:

1) Use snack time and craft times to talk about the traditional Thanksgiving dinner. Menus at home will vary from family to family. Talk about the Pilgrims and their first feast that had wild turkey cooked over open fires, venison, fish, clams, oysters, corn, pumpkins and beans. They were celebrating because they had come from England and had survived a very difficult first year. In this new country they survived by planting and harvesting crops. They invited their new Native American friends to join them for the feast dinner.

2) Use paper grocery bags to make Native American vests for the children. Cut fringe on the bottoms and decorate them with markers.

3) Make a quilt like the colonists did (almost), by giving each child a square of material 12"x18". Use smaller squares for more than 16 children (torn squares of a sheet are fine) and permanent colored markers. Each child can then draw a picture or a design on their square with markers and be helped to put on their name and the year. Stitch these squares together in strips of 4 on the portable sewing machine brought in, while each child watches their "quilt block" be put in. Then stitch the four strips together for a quilt top that can be sent away to be quilted. These make a wonderful gift for a teacher, director or Parent Board President. Adjust the square sizes for the finished size desired.



Explain that colonial America did not have sewing machines, so all the sewing was done by hand.

4) Make potpourri using dried flower petals and essential oils. This can be saved to make holiday gifts.

AGE:

3, 4, 5, 6 years.

EVALUATION:

Did the children understand that the people long ago in Colonial America did things differently?

EASIER AND HARDER IDEAS:

1) Younger children can make cornbread with biscuit mix, substituting 3/4 cup or cornmeal for 3/4 cup of mix.

2) Older children can learn more about the process of soap making, and how flower scent or perfume, and candle shavings or dyes are added to soap to make it fragrant and colorful. They can also learn more about gifts and quilt designs, looking at craft books on the subject.

SEND HOME IDEAS:

Suggest to parents that they talk to their children about early colonists making their own candles by dipping strings into wax. Look at some hand dipped candles on a trip to a gift shop or candle department of a department store.

Thinking Skills: Observing

Observing Carefully

CURRICULUM APPROACH:
Process approach

GOAL:
To learn more about observing carefully, and about a group of people and how they lived, long ago.

MATERIALS NEEDED:
Sharp pointed gravel or stones, or arrowheads purchased at a flea market or antique shop.

TIME NEEDED:
15-20 Minutes.

HOW TO DO IT:

1) Drop the arrowheads or sharp pointed gravel or stones in the dirt near your outdoor play area before class time.

2) Talk with the children about the Native Americans and how they had to learn to observe things very carefully: birds, plants, animals track and stones or arrowheads in the dirt. Talk more about what careful observing means.

3) Talk about the Native Americans. How did they get food? (Growing it or shooting animals, such as deer or buffalo with a bow and arrow?) Talk about arrows and how they're made with a stick fastened to a sharp rock or an arrowhead that was especially made.

4) Go outside and ask the children to pretend they are Native Americans. What do they see? If any notice the arrowheads (or sharp stones) on the ground, let the children handle them and talk more about them.

EVALUATION:
Do the children learn to look more carefully at the things around them?

EASIER AND HARDER IDEAS:

1) Younger children can observe animal tracks of a cat or dog in soft dirt, sand or snow. Or make footprints in the sand box outdoors and look at them. (Is the teacher's footprint larger than the child's?)

2) Older children can observe plants more carefully. Look at dandelions, clover, poison ivy (if desired--don't touch, ofcourse), and other plants and weeds that grow in your area. Talk about which ones the Native Americans used for food.

SEND HOME IDEAS:

Ask parents to look at birds with their children and observe their differences. If they have, or can get, a bird book to look up the birds, so much the better.

Colonial America: Tepees and Log cabins

CURRICULUM APPROACH:
Subject matter.

GOAL:
To understand more about early times and people in America.

MATERIALS NEEDED:
Large bed sheet, markers, plastic pipe, large umbrella or card table for tepee frame, Lincoln logs or blocks.

TIME NEEDED:
30-45 minutes.

HOW TO DO IT:

1) Talk to the children about how the first people who lived in America were Native Americans and many of them lived in tepees. The children can help decorate a sheet with markers to make their own tepee. Look at pictures of tepees if you have some.

2) A frame of plastic pipe indoors will support a tepee, or a large golf beach or patio type umbrella on its side can be the frame. If the weather is nice enough, the tepee can also be attached to the top of a swing set outside. Talk about how to go in and out of the tepee and what might have been inside.

3) Using "Lincoln Logs" or blocks help some children build log cabins like the colonists or settlers lived in. Talk about what they might have had inside. There wasn't much room.

4) Talk with the children about how these homes are different from the homes we live in today.

EVALUATION:
Did the children understand that some people long ago used to live very differently than we do today?

EASER AND HARDER IDEAS:

1) Younger children can make a tepee-tent with the sheet over a card table.

2) Older children can learn more about the holidays the Native Americans celebrated and the holidays of the Colonists.

SEND HOME IDEAS:

Ask parents to read a book or visit a museum with their children that shows more things that Colonial Americans and Native Americans used.

Thinking skills: Observing, Comparing, Sequencing, Cause and Effect

Weather Clocks

CURRICULUM APPROACH:
Activity approach

GOAL:
To observe and understand more about the weather and how people, animals and birds adapt to it.

MATERIALS NEEDED:
Paper plates, colored paper, brass type paper fasteners, 4 poster boards, colored tissue paper including green or collage materials, glue, pine cones, peanut butter, bird seed and string.

TIME NEEDED:
15-20 Minutes or 3 days.

HOW TO DO IT:

1) Make "weather clocks" with the children using paper plates. Make an arrow and fasten it to the center, with a paper fastener. Talk about weather and invite the children to draw or paste an umbrella, a sun, a kite (or another symbol for windy), and a cotton ball (or a symbol for cloudy) on the four sections of the plate. Turn the arrow to today's weather. Make a weather clock for the classroom to use at circle or snack time.

2) With a felt board talk about clothes we wear in different kinds of weather: coat, raincoat, bathing suit, umbrella, boots and more. What did the children wear to school today? Why? What would they wear to play at a swimming pool? In the snow? Think of more situations. Use the dress up clothes to illustrate the ideas. Glue a piece of felt on the back of pictures of clothes, to stick examples onto the felt board.

3) Draw four large bare trees on four poster boards. Invite the children to cut out leaves, or do a collage of green tissue paper for spring leaves, tissue paper in fall colors for autumn leaves, and tissue paper wadded up flower colors for spring leaves and nothing for winter. Hang up the finished posters and compare.

4) Talk about what happens to animals when the weather gets cold. Do some birds leave and some stay? Some animals (like bears and squirrels) store food for the winter. Make simple bird feeders by spreading peanut butter on small pine cones and rolling them in bird seed. Attach a string for hanging and hang outside to watch, or send home in a plastic bag.

AGE: 3, 4, 5

EVALUATION:

Did the children realize that the weather changing means other things change as well?

EASIER AND HARDER IDEAS:

1) Younger children can pretend to be walking in deep snow, sliding on ice, or falling through the air like a snow flake or autumn leaf during movement time. You may need to demonstrate these movements first.

2) Older children can make a weather game by gluing pictures of different kinds birds of weather on a small square box. Roll the box like dice and tell about the weather picture that comes to the top. Ask what he or she likes to do in that weather? Tell a story about it and take turns.

SEND HOME IDEAS:

Ask parents to use the weather clock their child brings home with the child and talk about the weather almost every day.

Month: December Day #IB Program Enrichment Papers
Thinking skills: Observing, Sequencing,Cause and Effect

Making Clouds

CURRICULUM APPROACH:
Process approach

GOAL:
To understand more about the weather environment by observing and understanding cause and effect.

MATERIALS NEEDED:
Glass jar with a tight lid, hot water, ice cubes, lamp or flashlight, dish pan with salt, small toys.

TIME NEEDED:
10-15 minutes several days.

HOW TO DO IT:

1) Talk to the children about making clouds. You need water and warm and cold temperatures. Put a couple of inches of very hot tap water in a jar and put the lid on it. Let it sit 5-10 minutes and then put ice cubes on the lid. Darken the room and put the lamp or flashlight, turned on, behind the jar. Do the children see fog or a mist (a cloud) forming? Observe carefully.

2) Talk about how first the hot water evaporated. Then the ice cooled it and a "cloud" of moisture formed. Real clouds are formed the same way. Look at clouds when you go outside. Let the children pretend to be clouds and "float" around. They can gently bump into each other and say "boom" like thunder. Real thunder happens this way too. Talk about what caused the pretend thunder.

3) Play snow with a pan of salt. Use toy animals, people, cars, sleds and trees. Does snow come out of clouds when it's cold?

4) Make snow scenes by using chalk on colored paper.

5) When clouds make rain, the leaves fall off trees just like they do with wind. Make leaf prints by putting (dry) leaves from outside on colored paper. Put them in the sun for a few hours. Remove the leaves and look at the print.

AGE
3, 4, 5

EVALUATION:

Did the children learn to look carefully at the jar and see the mist?

EASIER AND HARDER IDEAS:

1) Younger children can make "season pictures." Put a picture with a label, on paper for fall, winter, spring, and summer. With catalogs, let the children cut and paste pictures of people wearing clothes for that season. Skiing, swimming, beach scenes, and rain scenes with raincoats would be a few possibilities.

2) The older children can play in a "weather station" in the dramatic play area. Include a thermometer, a weather map, the weather page from the newspaper, a farmer's almanac, a barometer, and paper and pencil for writing weather reports. Children books featuring weather stories are also a good idea. Add a toy microphone (a block) and ask the child to be the weather man (or lady) on TV or the radio.

SEND HOME IDEAS:

Suggest to parents that they watch the weather on TV with their child and talk about what the "weather person" says or does.

Thermometers and Puddles

CURRICULUM APPROACH:
Subject matter

GOAL:
To understand more about cause and effect in science, and how we inquire into things.

MATERIALS NEEDED:
Large thermometers, construction paper, chalk, ping pong ball, square see through container or baby bottle, coffee can lid, cheese cloth or similar lightweight material, stapler.

TIME NEEDED:
10 to 15 minutes

HOW TO DO IT:

1) Use a large thermometer to measure the temperature in the school room and outside. Are they different? Why? Make thermometers out of construction paper and put numbers on them. Draw in the "Mercury" with a pencil and talk about how it goes up and down.

2) Talk about rain. What is it good for? What are all the things people and animals and plants need water for? On a rainy day, make a rain gauge from a see through container (square refrigerator box for example). Mark the inches on the side and put it outside on the window sill in the rain. Later keep it in your weather station.

3) After a rain, talk about puddles. Go outside together and draw a chalk circle around the edge of a puddle. Does the puddle get bigger or smaller as the day goes by? Suck up some puddle water with a meat baster and notice the dirt on it. Put the water in a pan to evaporate inside and talk about what remains after the water evaporates. Drop a small rock in the puddle outside and talk about the ripples. Put a ping pong ball in the middle of the puddle and blow.

4) On a windy day go outside and pretend to be the ping pong ball being blown by the wind. Can the children tell which way the wind is coming from? Make a windsock with the lid of a coffee can with the center cut out and light weight material stapled around it (or sewn). Tie this to a stick and put it in the ground. Now, can the children tell which way the wind is blowing?

AGE:
3,4,5

EVALUATION:

Do the children learn that wind and evaporation make changes they can't always see?

EASER AND HARDER IDEAS:

1) Younger children can make a weather calendar by drawing weather symbol pictures on an ordinary calendar.

2) Older children can make a weather vane out of a drinking straw with a pin pushed through the center into the eraser end of a pencil. They can add a feather tail and a paper arrow head in a slit to make a more complete arrow, if they want.

SEND HOME IDEAS:

Ask parents to talk about wind, wind mills, and pinwheels with their children.

Month: December Day #IIA Program Enrichment Papers
Social Studies

Other Lands and Holidays

CURRICULUM APPROACH:
Activity approach

GOAL:
To understand more about Christmas and holidays in other lands.

MATERIALS NEEDED:
Construction paper, purchased pinata or brown paper grocery bag, twigs, pipe cleaners, glue, glitter.

TIME NEEDED:
10-15 minutes, 2 or 3 days.

HOW TO DO IT:

1) Talk about how people in America have backgrounds in Christian and Jewish traditions and in many other cultures. Most of the Christmas traditions in the USA have been adapted from other countries: Santa Claus, reindeer, decorated trees and wreaths, stockings hung by the chimney, and groups of carolers, are all from other countries. Help the children make a wreath for the front door of the classroom. Invite the children to make individual Christmas trees.

2) Talk about how in Sweden, they celebrate St. Lucia's day on December 13th. One of the girls in the family wears a long white dress (like St. Lucia) and a crown of evergreen with candles on it. She serves coffee and buns to her parents in bed. Her brothers wear star hats, which looks like tall paper party hats decorated with stars. Make these 2 kinds of hats with the children out of construction paper.

3) In Mexico, on Christmas day, the children take turns hitting a "pinata" with a stick. When it breaks, candies and treats fall on the floor. Make and decorate a pinata out of brown paper bags or paper mache' or buy one and decorate it. It can be decorated with Christmas decorations or to look like a bird or animal. Fill it with treats. Break it (or them) on the last day before Christmas.

4) Talk about France. At Christmas the people burn a special fire called a "Yule Log" often made of cherry wood. Father Christmas puts presents in the children shoes. Help the children make "yule logs" from twigs and pipe cleaners with decorations glued on; or use pictures of logs with decorations glued on.

AGE:
3, 4, 5

EVALUATION:

Did the children realize that different people do different things at the Christmas holidays?

EASER AND HARDER IDEAS:

1) Younger children can help stuff the pinata with candies and other "treats."

2) Older children can learn more about Holland and Saint Nicholas, who brings presents on December 6, his birthday. His assistant, Black Peter, helps him. One year the dropped gold down the chimney for three poor daughters, and it landed in the stockings they had washed and hung up to dry at the fireplace. We get our custom of hanging up Christmas stocking from the people of Holland.

SEND HOME IDEAS:

Send home the "Yule Log" made by each child to be a Christmas tree decoration or center piece.

Thinking skills: Understanding, Imagining, Predicting

England and Pantomime

CURRICULUM APPROACH:
Process approach

GOAL:
To understand more about holiday activities in other lands.

MATERIALS NEEDED:
Construction paper, glue or staplers, decorations or glitter for party hats.

TIME NEEDED:
15-20 minutes on 3 days.

HOW TO DO IT:

1) Talk about how in England Father Christmas visits the homes of children to place gifts in their stockings. Christmas dinner is like a party and many people wear paper party hats. Make paper party hats with the children and wear them at snack time.

2) Another holiday tradition in England is to go see a musical play called a "pantomime". This is a familiar story or fairy tale told with music and acting but no talking. Invite the children to act out a simple story like "Goldilocks" or "The Little Engine that Could" in pantomime. Ahead of time talk about (and predict) ways to act out different parts of the story without talking.

3) In Germany the advent wreath is a wreath of green branches or plant leaves with 4 candles. One is to be lit each Sunday before Christmas. Make these wreaths and candles wreaths with construction paper and color in the yellow candle flame one per week, before Christmas break.

4) Make simple Advent calendars, by attaching a chain of paper loops (red and green?) to a decorated picture or item. The children can tear off one a day until Christmas at home or at school. Talk about Germany as the children work. Predict what kinds of glue, staples, or tape would hold the loops closed the best for tearing.

AGE:
3, 4, 5

EVALUATION:
Do the children imagine good ways to act out stories. Do they guess good ways to make and attach the paper loops?

EASIER AND HARDER IDEAS:

1) Younger children can make paper chains of all colors to put on a tree outside or inside.

2) Older children can make an advent calendar with a real calendar by placing Christmas stickers on each number. Then cross them off, one each day.

SEND HOME IDEAS:

Encourage parents to talk to their children about the holidays celebrated in their home. Suggest that they make something with their child related to these holidays.

Social Studies
Language Arts

"Hello" in Many Languages

CURRICULUM APPROACH:
Subject matter approach

GOAL:
To learn more about other countries: their location, their language and some traditions.

MATERIALS NEEDED:
World map or globe, pictures of people from other countries, glue, felt, flannel board.

TIME NEEDED:
10-15 Minutes.

HOW TO DO IT:

1) Tell the children that in these other lands we have been talking about, people talk in other languages. Learn to say "hello" or "Merry Christmas" in some of these languages: Spanish (Buenas Dias); French (Bon Jour); German (Guten Tag), etc. and teach it to the children. Have a parent from that country come in to help, if there is one available in your class or school.

2) Get out a globe or world map and show the children where the countries are. Show the children the United States, also so they can see how far away they are. Talk about how you would get there. Can you drive? Try to find pictures of the people from those countries. Glue some felt on the back so the pictures will stick to a flannel board.

3) Talk about the Jewish traditional holiday of Hanukkah. Tell the Hanukkah story or invite a guest to do so. Invite the children to make a simple Hanukkah card with a picture of a Menorah on it. Practice saying "Shalom."

4) Talk about how in Italy children have to wait for their Christmas presents until the twelfth night after Christmas (the Epiphany). That night children in Italy wait for "La Befana" the good witch, to come down the chimney. Practice saying "Bon Giorno" for "Good Day".

5) In India they celebrate "Divali," the festival of lights. Draw good luck designs with colored chalk on dark construction paper.

EVALUATION:
Do the children learn to say "hello" in one or two new languages?

AGE: 3, 4, 5, 6

EASIER AND HARDER IDEAS:

1) Younger children can talk about and learn more about Christmas food in America. Let them help make Christmas sugar cookies that are rolled in their hands and then flattened. Sprinkle colored sugar on them and bake them.

2) Older children can help make potato latkes (similar to potato pancakes) for the group. This is a Jewish Tradition.

SEND HOME IDEAS:

Ask parents to send _in_ more ideas about Christmas and other holidays in other lands. Or invite them to bring in artifacts and traditional food to share with the children.

Hot and Cold

CURRICULUM APPROACH:
Process approach

GOAL:
Studying cause and effect.

MATERIALS NEEDED:
Saucer or bowl, large sheet of paper or flip chart on which to write "diary."

TIME NEEDED:
15 minutes, a few minutes every hour.

HOW TO DO IT:

1) Bring snow inside in the saucer or bowl.

2) Talk about what causes the snow to become water. Talk about the effect that the heat in your classroom has on the snow.

3) Ask what effect the heat in your room has on people. Answers include that we take off our coats, etc. Look at snow on the sleeves of coats children wore outside. Ask what is happening to it?

4) Take a thermometer outside and notice its change. Ask what effect the heat in the classroom has on the thermometer when it is brought in from outside.

AGE:
4, 5 years

EVALUATION:
Did the children understand that heat and cold have certain effects? Can they apply this idea in other ways?

EASIER AND HARDER IDEAS:

1) Put an ice cube in a bowl. Check on its progress as it melts.

2) Have the children dictate a "snow melting" diary that you write on a large piece of paper or flip chart. For example:
10:30 - snow half melted
11:00 - only water in the dish

SEND HOME IDEAS:
Ask parents to talk about other cause and effect situations. Let children watch what happens when eggs are put in a hot frying pan. Have parents ask children the difference between cooked carrots and uncooked carrots. Remind parents to stress safety in the kitchen and not let children touch hot things.

Snow Numbers*

CURRICULUM APPROACH:
Subject matter approach

GOAL:
Science and math learnings.

MATERIALS NEEDED:
Snow or sand. Snow or playdough with which to make "snowballs."

TIME NEEDED:
15 minutes.

HOW TO DO IT:

1) When children are outside playing on a snowy day have them observe snowflakes on their arms with a magnifying glass.

2) Make a number in the snow with your feet. Ask children who want to, to make the same number or different numbers. Stick to numbers under 5 unless you are sure children know quantities for larger numbers.*

3) Make snowballs and count them for practice in quantities. Ask a child to make snowballs, then track the number he or she makes in the snow.

VOCABULARY SUGGESTIONS:
Melting, freezing, many, much, lots, drifts.

AGE:
3, 4, 5 years

EVALUATION:
Did children make at least some numbers correctly? In counting the snowballs did they touch each one and understand one-to-one correspondence?

EASIER AND HARDER IDEAS:

1) Talk about why the snow stays in any path or footstep you have made. Discuss the heat from their shoes melting the track or footstep in place.

2) When making snowballs, do simple addition problems. How many do 2 snowballs and 2 snowballs make? 3 and 3? For older 4 and 5 year olds work up to numbers between 5 and 10. Try other combinations in math questions.

SEND HOME IDEAS:
Ask parents to have children count things any time there are 4 or fewer things. Ask parents to make sure their child touches each thing he or she counts. Start with one or two if necessary.

*Some of this can be done in sand if you are in a warm climate.

Snowy Wonders

CURRICULUM APPROACH:
Activity Approach

GOAL:
Learning about winter and snow.

MATERIALS NEEDED:
White and colored fingerpaints. A record of music that sounds like whirling snowflakes. The book The Snowy Day by Ezra Jack Keats. Two or three sleds for use outdoors, and perhaps two or three small shovels.

TIME NEEDED:
15 minutes of art time, 15 minutes of music time, 20 minutes outdoors and story time.

HOW TO DO IT:

1) During free choice time put out fingerpaint materials for children who would like to choose this activity. As two or three begin fingerpainting with colored paint, show them that a finger stuck in white paint will make snowflakes on their pictures. Put out more materials as more children become interested.

2) During music time talk about the motions snowflakes make. Put on a record and have the children be whirling snowflakes to music. They can be a driving blizzard or gently falling snowflakes next. For more motion activity ask the children to walk as if they were in deep, wet snow. Have a pretend snowball fight. Imitate shoveling heavy snow.

3) At story time read The Snowy Day by Ezra Jack Keats. Discuss the story. Talk about snow coming in winter only, and other aspects of winter.

4) At outdoor time take the sleds and shovels outside for the children to use.

AGE:
3, 4, 5 years

EVALUATION:
Do children take more of an interest in snow? Do they understand that it can be heavy or light, whirling or falling straight? Have they discovered new ideas about snow?

EASIER AND HARDER IDEAS:

1) Make collages with cotton balls pasted or glued on pictures for snowballs.

2) Investigate icy snow, and the ice crusts on snow in the shade. Talk about ice, icicles and ice from the refrigerator. Put some water in a dish outside to see if it turns to ice.

SEND HOME IDEAS:

Encourage parents to help children put on and take off their boots by themselves. Share the trick of putting plastic bags over shoes to slip them into boots that are too small. Ask a helping mother to set up a boot exchange for your class or your center so that all the children might have the right sized boots.

Dear Teacher:

Thank you for your work with children. Thank you for initiating a new activity with the children today. Creativity always gives people a lift - children and adults alike.

Thanks again,

Cynthia Jones

Cynthia Jones, Ph.D.
Director, ECEA Institute

What Melts Fastest?

CURRICULUM APPROACH:
Process approach

GOAL:
Understanding more about cause and effect.

MATERIALS NEEDED:
3 saucers.

TIME NEEDED:
15 minutes at outdoor time, 5-10 minutes at free choice indoor time, and 5-10 minutes at group time.

HOW TO DO IT:

1) At outdoor time collect snow in 2 of the saucers and put an icicle in the third saucer to bring inside later.

2) Make a snowman with the children. Children begin by rolling a small ball of snow around. As the fall increases in size children become aware that the snow will stick together and become compact.

3) Talk about the heighth and diameter of the snowman. Measure with a tape measure.

4) Look at ice forming in puddles, bird baths or a pond. Look at it again later in the week.

5) Bring in the three saucers prepared in #1 and add water to one of the snow saucers. Ask the children to watch to see which one melts the fastest. At group time check again and talk about what causes the icicle to melt more slowly. Accept all answers (e.g. "maybe because it is pointed"). Help children learn to wonder, to observe, and to understand that the heat of the classroom is having an effect. Discuss the effect of adding water to snow. Why does this cause the snow to melt faster? Is it warmer than the snow? Have children feel the water and the snow to find out.

AGE:
3, 4, 5 years

EVALUATION:
Do children understand that they can cause snow to melt faster by adding water to it? Do they understand that they can cause other effects? Do the children notice that it takes days for the snowman to melt?

EASIER AND HARDER IDEAS:

1) Talk about cause and effect with people. What makes us mad? What makes us cry? What makes us happy?

2) Play float and sink in water with various objects including a penny and a feather. What is the cause of the penny sinking but not the feather? Discuss the effect of weight and surface area.

3) Take a tape measure outside in your pocket. Measure the snowman's height and diameter several days running. Discuss any changes you observe and their causes.

SEND HOME IDEAS:

Suggest that parents make a snowman at home with their child. If you have funds, send home a tape measure with every child and ask parents to measure different household items with their child. Accuracy is not important. Using a number line together is important.

Dear Teacher:

Thank you for your work with children. Thank you for using resources around you to enrich the children's day: These PEPapers, a curriculum book or two from the library, ideas from a course you took. As you grow, the children will grow too.

Thanks again,

Cynthia Jones

Cynthia Jones, Ph.D.
Director, ECEA Institute

Month: January Day #2B Program Enrichment Papers

Snow or Sand Sounds

CURRICULUM APPROACH:
Subject matter approach

GOAL:
Develop language and knowledge of sounds.

MATERIALS NEEDED:
None.

TIME NEEDED:
10 minutes of outdoor time, 5-10 minutes of indoor time.

HOW TO DO IT:

1) During outdoor time have the children make tracks with their feet in snow (or in sand) in letter shapes.

2) Start with hard consonants such as "D," "T" and "P" which are easy to identify with their sounds.

3) When inside again ask the children what objects in the room begin with the same sounds. For example:

"D"	"Duh"	"doll"
"B"	"Bah"	"baby"
"T"	"Tuh"	"table"
"P"	"Puh"	"pan"

AGE:
4, 5

EVALUATION:
Do the children realize that the letters have sounds? Can they get one or two of these four right?

EASIER AND HARDER IDEAS:

1) Make other shapes in the snow or sand. Children can make a square, a circle, a triangle, or a rectangle.

2) Look at other letter shapes in the classroom to see how to make their shapes tomorrow.

SEND HOME IDEAS:
Ask parents to have children tell them the names of objects at home that begin with the sounds for B, D, T and P.

Crunchy Snowflakes

CURRICULUM APPROACH:
Activity approach

GOAL:
Learning more about snow.

MATERIALS NEEDED:
Tempera paint and brushes or fingerpaints, newsprint, pictures of snowflakes.

TIME NEEDED:
15 minutes at art time, 5 minutes at story time, 10 minutes outdoors.

HOW TO DO IT:

1) At free choice time have children that want to paint, paint on one half of their paper. Fold the paper in half, rub it, and look at the print it makes. Talk about the print being symmetrical and that snowflakes are symmetrical or matching on both sides. Look at pictures of snowflakes.

2) Look at other things in the classroom that are the same on both sides (books, balls, blocks). Then look at things in the classroom that are not the same on both sides (people, pictures, some toys).

3) At story time talk about sounds related to weather and snow. Rain and thunder make one kind of sound. All can then imitate them. Snow is very quiet but it does make a sound: crunch, crunch, crunch when people walk on it. Or slip, slosh when the snow is melting.

4) At outdoor time play a listening game and listen to crunching snow when people walk; listen to passing cars; water dripping from trees; other sounds in the snow. Use the sleds and shovels brought in on Day #1.

AGE:
3, 4, 5 years

EVALUATION:
Do the children listen and describe at least some of the sounds they hear outside? Do some of them understand that two sides of something can be alike or different?

EASIER AND HARDER IDEAS:

1) You or the children tear up white paper into "confetti" snowflakes and have an indoor "snow storm." Later use these up in pasting.

2) Have older children fold round white paper in six (in half, and then in thirds) and cut "snowflakes" by cutting near the outer edge and cutting pieces from the folds. Open up the folds and notice that the sides match. Discuss the concept that every snowflake is different. Use a magnifying glass to observe snowflakes outside. Look at pictures of snowflakes and compare with those you made.

SEND HOME IDEAS:

Send home the prints made during art to be used as placemats. Write "Happy Winter Time" or some appropriate sentiment on each. Encourage parents to have children listen to sounds and describe them when they are outdoors, in the car together, at the store, or anywhere.

Dear Teacher:

Thank you for your work with children today. Draw or paste a gold star on this Program Enrichment Paper when you are finished. Put stars on the other Papers you've done too. Adults need rewards just as children do. Even small ones are nice!

Thanks again,

Cynthia Jones

Cynthia Jones, Ph.D.
Director, ECEA Institute

Cooperation in a Family

CURRICULUM APPROACH
Process approach

GOAL:
Building cooperation skills for family living.

MATERIALS NEEDED:
Filmstrip "Getting Along with Others," paper, crayons or markers, puppets if desired.

TIME NEEDED:
10-15 minutes at group time.

HOW TO DO IT:

1) Have the children "brainstorm" ways of being a good family member at group times. Write these on a large piece of paper.

2) Encourage children to identify the rights and responsibilities of a person in a family. Talk about ways of solving conflicts in a family. List these also.

3) Describe ways of getting along with others. Compare situations within the family and outside the family. Show the filmstrip "Getting Along with Others."

4) Discuss things which make each child angry or sad and decide how to handle each situation. Generate alternatives with the group. Role play some or all of the alternatives. This may take several days.

AGE:
2, 3, 4, 5 to 100

EVALUATION:
Did the children each have several ideas about how to be a good family member?

EASIER AND HARDER IDEAS:

1) Compare animal families and how they function. Squirrels put away nuts for the winter, birds bring worms to the young in the nest. Baby birds take turns trying to fly, and so forth.

2) Ask older children to draw pictures of someone being cooperative.

SEND HOME IDEAS:
Ask parents to share with their children how they did cooperative things with their families when they were young. If possible, call on grandparents to share more details of cooperative projects.

Similarities and Differences

CURRICULUM APPROACH:
Subject matter

GOAL:
Developing social studies concepts. Identifying ways in which family members contribute to health and happiness of others. Identifying similarities and differences among family members. Learning that all living things are interrelated.

TIME NEEDED:
10 minutes at circle time, 20 minutes at art/free choice time, perhaps for several days.

MATERIALS NEEDED:
Small brown paper "lunch" bags, newspaper, twist ties, markers or crayons, paper, library books about family cooperation, filmstrip "I'm a Part of a Family."

HOW TO DO IT:

1) At free choice time have materials available for making family member puppets, for children who choose to do so. Children make puppets by stuffing a lunch bag with newspaper and fastening the bottom with a twist tie.

2) Children then mark features of different family members with markers or crayons. Talk about what color hair and eyes each family member has. Yarn and glue can be used for hair but this takes longer to dry. Discuss similarities and differences in features of family members. How many wear glasses? Does one have a mustache or a beard? It may take several days to make several puppets.

3) Encourage children to role play family members working together in the dramatic play/kitchen area with their puppets.

4) At circle time talk about ways their family members help each other. Show the filmstrip "I'm a Part of a Family." Show and "tell" stories from library books on family cooperation on successive days. Leave books on a table available for children to browse through.

AGE:
3, 4, 5

EVALUATION:
Do children identify one or two similarities or differences in family members' features? Do they tell at least one way a family member helps? Do they see themselves as helping, occasionally?

EASIER AND HARDER IDEAS:

1) Compare animal families from library books and see how they function. Tell the story "The Three Bears."

2) Have fours and fives make a "Family Graph" from blocks of the same size on the floor. Children estimate relative heights and lay out blocks for each family member. Toilet paper from a roll also makes excellent graphs.

SEND HOME IDEAS:

Encourage parents to talk with their children about how family members help each other or do things to make each other happy. Ask them to let their children draw pictures of family members working together.

Dear Teacher:

Thank you for your work with children. As you evaluate the children's achievements take pride in your own achievements too. Give yourself:

A gold star for every new activity you've tried;
A hot fudge sundae (or etc.) for the extra patience you had with boots and mittens; and
Three new resource materials you've discovered and really love.

Whatever it is, take pride in your achievement - because you are helping children have a better tomorrow.

Thanks again,

Cynthia Jones

Cynthia Jones, Ph.D.
Director, ECEA Institute

"What is Special About Me"

CURRICULUM APPROACH:
Activity approach

GOAL:
Developing a positive self image.

MATERIALS NEEDED:
Very large paper taped together to make a piece 3' x 4', markers, magazine pictures of people with different expressions on their faces. Sesame Street and Hap Palmer records "All About Me," book I Am Special, filmstrip "Who Am I."

TIME NEEDED:
20-30 minutes at free choice time, 5-10 minutes in circle time.

HOW TO DO IT:

1) Ask a child to lie down on a large piece of paper and make an outline drawing of him or her.

2) Ask the child to dictate to the adult what he or she likes about themselves. Record this on the paper and share it with the group at circle time. Post the drawings.

3) Have the children at circle time tell what they think a person is feeling, using the cut out magazine pictures.

4) Role play each feeling using puppets or props from the dramatic play area if desired. Show the film "Who Am I," read the book I Am Special, and play the records "All About Me."

AGE:
3, 4, 5

EVALUATION:
Can the children each say 3 or 4 things they like about themselves? Do they enjoy role-playing feelings at circle time?

EASIER AND HARDER IDEAS:

1) Ask the children to bring in more magazine pictures of people showing feelings and continue the playing for several days.

2) Have the children make "Feeling Puppets" as described in Day #2B with happy or sad or mad faces.

SEND HOME IDEAS:
Ask parents to have each family member list what they like about themselves and share it at a meal. Post these lists. Try having a "person of the week" when others do nice things for one family member. Choose the person alphabetically.

"Learning About the Telephone"

CURRICULUM APPROACH:
Activity approach

GOAL:
Learning about the telephone.

MATERIALS NEEDED:
Construction paper, scissors, glue or paste, yarn, crayons.

TIME NEEDED:
10 minutes at free choice time, 5 minutes at circle time.

HOW TO DO IT:

1) Put out paper and yarn and encourage the children to cut out a telephone and attach a yarn cord.

2) Put out crayons so that some children can draw a telephone. Comment and encourage children to think about whether the cord is straight or coiled.

3) Encourage children to play with their phones and act out conversations.

4) Talk about the order of conversation on the phone at circle time. First "Hello," then your conversation, then "Goodbye," Talk about how to dial and use a phone. Follow suggestions in Day 2B and 2C.

AGE:
4, 5

EVALUATION:
Do the children enjoy their imaginative play on the telephone?

EASIER AND HARDER IDEAS:

1) Practice answering the phone. Tape record sounds of a ringing phone or ring a bell to start off the practice.

2) Walk to a nearby phone booth, talk about the coins needed to make a call. Call up someone you know will be there, or your center.

SEND HOME IDEAS:
Have children make a second phone and send them both home. Encourage parents to talk on the phone with their child. Pretend they are other people or grandparents and practice possible conversations.

Weather, Time and Emergencies

CURRICULUM APPROACH:
Subject matter approach

GOAL:
Learning math concepts including number recognition using a combination of numbers and a pattern of numbers.

MATERIALS NEEDED:
A real phone.

TIME NEEDED:
15 minutes during free choice time.

HOW TO DO IT:

1) Teach children to recognize the numbers from 1 to 10 if they are interested in learning this. Show them the actual numbers on the phone.

2) Teach children to recognize the sequence of their own phone numbers printed out on a card. Sing it to the tune of the "Alphabet Song."

3) Encourage children to recognize their own phone number and practice dialing it.

4) Invite children to call each other up.

5) Print out the numbers for weather, time and emergency (911 in some areas). Talk about when these numbers would be used. Practice using them if possible.

AGE:
4, 5

EVALUATION:
Do children enjoy using the phone? Do they understand some relationship between the phone number and calling a person?

EASIER AND HARDER IDEAS:

1) Place the phone in the dramatic play corner. Invite the children to call up grandmother, Aunt Sue, Uncle Joe, and so forth.

2) Invite children to read out another child's phone number and ask "Is that your phone number?" The child whose number it is stands up. Take turns doing this until a child can recognize his or her own phone number.

SEND HOME IDEAS:
Tell parents that you are learning about using the phone and calling time and weather. Encourage them to let their child do this while they are present. Ask them to post a neighbor's or relative's phone number to call in case of emergencies.

How to Get Help

CURRICULUM APPROACH:
Process approach

GOAL:
Cooperating, thinking, decision-making.

MATERIALS NEEDED:
Real telephone, tape recording of sounds of a phone ringing.

TIME NEEDED:
10 minutes at circle time.

HOW TO DO IT:

1) Think up an example of an emergency and discuss it with the children. Talk about how to get help.

2) Discuss and cooperate in deciding what kind of help is needed and who to call.

3) Act out an emergency, ring the phone tape and have children take turns dealing with it.

4) Play the tape of the ringing telephone and ask the children to differentiate its sounds from other sounds, such as a record playing or children across the hall.

AGE:
4, 5

EVALUATION:
Do the children realize the telephone might be helpful in an emergency?

EASIER AND HARDER IDEAS:

1) Play a listening game with a toy telephone. Say "ring" or ring a bell. When the child picks up the toy phone give him a simple instruction. "Hop on one foot." "Clap your hands." Work up to two or three instructions at once.

2) Older children can dictate a listing of their friends' names and their phone numbers on a piece of cardboard to be kept near the phone at home.

SEND HOME IDEAS:
Send home the child's telephone list or ask parents to help the child make one. Suggest to parents that they allow a child to make his or her own call. This encourages independence and teaches the child to carry through on a sequence of numbers from left to right. Suggest they add emergency numbers to this list.

Learning About Wind and Air

CURRICULUM APPROACH:
Activity approach

GOAL:
Making kites and flying them, blowing and whistling.

MATERIALS NEEDED:
Construction paper, hole punch, string, scissors.

TIME NEEDED:
5 minutes during free choice time, 10-15 minutes of outdoor time.

HOW TO DO IT:

1) Show the children how to cut off the corners of a piece of construction paper to make a diamond shape. Draw lines to cut on (or close to) if necessary.

2) Punch a hole in the corner and attach a three-foot piece of string.

3) Have the children fly the kites outside by running and seeing the air lift them.

4) Talk about wind and air in circle time. Talk about air in the body. Ask children to put their hands on their chests and feel the air in their lungs. Have them hold their hands in front of their mouths when they sing to feel the air. Have some fun trying to whistle. When you sing you are the instrument.

EVALUATION:
Do the children enjoy flying their kites?

AGE:
3, 4, 5

EASIER AND HARDER IDEAS:

1) Let the children blow on things such as crumpled paper, a ping pong ball or a balloon. Ask if they can blow something toward themselves. They will find that wind tends to blow things away.

2) Let older children do straw painting. Cut straws to three or four-inch lengths. Have children blow watery non-toxic paint onto clean paper to make a design. One, two or three colors can be used. Remind the children to breathe deeply between blowings.

SEND HOME IDEAS:
Send home the kites and ask the parents to fly kites with their children. A tail can be added to these. Purchased kites may also be used. Schedule a parent-child kite flying on a Saturday.

How Do We Feel the Wind?

CURRICULUM APPROACH:
Subject matter approach

GOAL:
Developing counting skills and science skills.

MATERIALS NEEDED:
A scarf or piece of filmy material for every child, large transparent plastic bag, collage materials and dry leaves.

TIME NEEDED:
10 minutes at music time, 5 minutes outdoors, 5 minutes at circle time.

HOW TO DO IT:

1) Ask the children how they feel the wind while you are all outdoors. Do they feel it in their hair? Rushing around their knees? In their eyes and ears?

2) Take out the scarves at music time, count them by colors, sizes and sets. Invite the children to wave them around to music. Pretend they are the wind. See if they make any wind (breeze).

3) Fill the big plastic bag with collage materials and dry leaves and knot it. At circle time show the children that they can see the materials moving around inside it.

4) Let the children see what happens when you let air escape from the plastic bag.

EVALUATION:
Can the children tell you many ways they feel the wind? Do they enjoy using scarves to music?

AGE:
3, 4, 5

EASIER AND HARDER IDEAS:

1) Pick up a handful of dry grass outdoors. Let it fall and talk about which way the wind is blowing. Hold out a handkerchief to see if the wind will blow it.

2) Hold up a wet finger outdoors. The side that dries first will feel colder. That is the side the wind is coming from.

SEND HOME IDEAS:

Encourage parents to let children have a scarf or two to dance with while listening to records. Explain that this is good for large muscle coordination and that even two year olds have a sense of rhythm.

Dear Teacher:

Thank you for your work with children. Did you know this is some of the most important work in the world? You are making a contribution to the future every day.

Thanks again,

Cynthia Jones

Cynthia Jones, Ph.D.
Director, ECEA Institute

Month: March Day #1C Program Enrichment Papers

Moving Air and Watching the Wind

CURRICULUM APPROACH:
Process approach

GOAL:
Observing and predicting.

MATERIALS NEEDED:
Empty plastic liquid detergent bottles, soft white string, three cardboard rectangles 12 to 14" by 1", 12 to 14" by 3" and 12 to 14" by 6". Stick, dowel, yardstick or clothesline.

TIME NEEDED:
5 minutes during circle time, 5 minutes outside.

HOW TO DO IT:
1) Put the string in the empty detergent bottle with two or three inches sticking out.

2) At circle time, squeeze the bottle so the children can see the string coming out. Talk about the moving air causing this. Make several to use during free choice time.

3) Put holes in the end of each cardboard rectangle. Tie it loosely to a stick or clothesline with string.

4) Take this outside and ask the children to observe it. Which piece of cardboard will be blown highest by the wind? Talk about size and surface area.

EVALUATION:
Do the children predict which cardboard will blow the highest?

AGE:
3, 4, 5

EASIER AND HARDER IDEAS:
1) Look for things the wind does. It blows things along such as the paper in a gutter, a ball on the grass, sail boats and kites, trees and clouds.

2) Look for things the wind supports. It holds up birds, planes, parachutes, and gliders.

SEND HOME IDEAS:
Encourage parents to make a simple paper airplane with their child or send one home. They can make it from an 8-1/2" by 11" piece of paper folded in half lengthwise, with a point folded into one end. Fold sides back in quarters. Ask them to fly it or several with their child.

Signs of Spring

CURRICULUM APPROACH:
Activity approach

GOAL:
Learning that spring is the beginning of the growing season.

MATERIALS NEEDED:
Paper, glue, cotton balls, tissue paper, twigs, construction paper, pictures of birds or bird pattern, crayons.

TIME NEEDED:
20 minutes of outdoor time, 15 minutes of free choice time.

HOW TO DO IT:

1) Take a walk to look for the signs of spring: grass turning greener, buds on trees and shrubs, flowers, birds and so forth.

2) Discuss these signs of spring with the children. Make a booklet about spring. Include pussy willow, forsythia, crocuses, birds, trees or whatever is appropriate in your region.

3) Visit a park with gardens and look for more signs of spring. Talk about early spring flowers.

4) Add new ideas to the booklet(s). Children can each make a picture or collage to go in one booklet, or each child that wants to can make his own booklet.

EVALUATION:
Did the children become more aware of more things beginning to grow?

AGE:
3, 4, 5

EASIER AND HARDER IDEAS:

1) Bring some forsythia branches or a branch off a fruit tree inside and put them in warm water in a somewhat sunny location. Each day put some fresh water in the container. It takes 3 or 4 weeks for these "dead" branches to blossom.

2) Plant a narcissus, hyacinth or crocus bulb in some stones in a shallow container. Keep adding fresh, warm water. Wait and watch for it to blossom.

SEND HOME IDEAS:
Ask parents to call their child's attention to birds they see or trees starting to bud. Ask them to read or tell a story about birds to their child. Remind parents that telling stories can be done while riding in the car.

Starting Small and Growing

CURRICULUM APPROACH:
Subject matter approach

GOAL:
Understanding science concepts about growing plants and animals.

MATERIALS NEEDED:
Seeds and tools: shovel, hoe, rake. A calendar and symbols for growing. Book The Carrot Seed by Ruth Krauss, Harper, NY. Fertilized eggs in an incubator from a local hatchery.

TIME NEEDED:
30 minutes of outdoor time, 10 minutes of circle time, 10 minutes of free choice time, 5-10 minutes a day for follow up for six weeks.

HOW TO DI IT:

1) Plant seeds outdoors using simple garden tools. Carrots and radishes are almost always successful. Read The Carrot Seed at circle time.

2) Keep a growth calendar and record change or lack of change. Use symbols for rain, sun and new sprouts that are stick-on or drawn. Discuss the concept that growing takes time.

3) Cover some seedlings with a box and observe the difference this makes.

4) Hatch chicks in an incubator according to instructions from the hatchery. Watch them grow. Discuss the concept that animals need food, water, warmth, loving care and rest.

EVALUATION:
Do the children take an interest in the things they are growing? Do they observe changes with interest?

AGE:
3, 4, 5

EASIER AND HARDER IDEAS:

1) Talk about the fact that everything alive starts small and then grows. Bring in pictures or stories of other examples such as baby animals and seedling trees.

2) Plant seeds indoors in cans or egg cartons if you are in a cold climate or do not have access to a garden plot.

SEND HOME IDEAS:

Ask parents to send in a well labeled baby picture of their child. Talk about how all the children started small too. Have a real baby visit if possible.

Dear Teacher:

Thank you for your work with children. Did you know this is some of the most important work in the world? You are making a contribution to the future every day.

Thanks again,

Cynthia Jones

Cynthia Jones, Ph.D.
Director, ECEA Institute

Respecting and Appreciating Life

CURRICULUM APPROACH
Process approach

GOAL:
Observing, noticing and valuing.

MATERIALS NEEDED:
Paper towels, clear plastic cups, lima beans that have been soaked in water overnight, newsprint, markers.

TIME NEEDED:
15 minutes during free choice time, 10 minutes at circle time.

HOW TO DO IT:

1) Have children who want to, place a lima bean in a clear plastic cup and cover it with a wet paper towel.

2) Watch a plant sprout from the seed. As the plant grows, talk about the root, the stem, and the leaves.

3) Write the children's observations on a large newspring "calendar" each day. Encourage children to notice carefully any changes that occur.

4) Discuss growing things and "brainstorm" ways that the children can appreciate and respect them. Suggestions might be to not step on plants, play gently with kittens and puppies, take turns and respect each other when using toys and materials.

EVALUATION:
Could the children report changes as they occur in their lima bean plants?

AGE:
3, 4, 5

EASIER AND HARDER IDEAS:

1) Talk about seeds. Make a seed collage from many different kinds of seeds: apple, orange, melon, rice, corn, tomato, etc.

2) Have a pet in the classroom if possible: rabbit, guinea pig, even a goldfish. Talk about its shape and how it moves. Take turns feeding it and caring for it.

SEND HOME IDEAS:
Ask parents to talk about a pet with their child whether their own or a neighbor's. Talk about its shape, weight, movement, breathing, heartbeat and body covering. Have a puppy or kitten or a cat or a dog visit if possible.

Visit the Zoo

CURRICULUM APPROACH:
Activity approach

GOAL:
Visiting the zoo and identifying zoo animals.

MATERIALS NEEDED:
Extra adults and cars to help with a trip to the zoo. Sesame Street magazine, May 1982; A Visit to the Zoo, Hallmark Children's Edition; The Animals' ABCs," Hallmark Children's Edition; The Zoo Book by Jan P. Floog, Golden Press; Animals: My Happy Book, Dolisha Press; Animal Kingdom: Star Book, Seigo Publishers. Circus and zoo songs from This is Music Book I by Sur, McCall, Fisher and Tolbert, 1962, Allyn and Bacon, Boston, Mass. Record: "A Trip to the Zoo" by Young People's Records - order from the Disc Shop, 1815 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C.

TIME NEEDED:
2 hours on trip day, 15 minutes a day at circle and music time for 3-4 days.

HOW TO DO IT:

1) Read and discuss the books on zoo animals over several days. Practice identifying different animals.

2) Involve the children in planning a trip to the zoo. What is needed? How should they behave? Sing zoo songs from "This is Music."

3) Visit the zoo and enjoy the animals.

4) Go over the books on zoo animals and see how many now can be identified.

AGE:
3, 4, 5

EVALUATION:
Are some of the children able to identify some of the animals? Can they do this at the zoo as well as from books?

EASIER AND HARDER IDEAS:

1) Act out "Train to the Zoo" record by CRG. Order from the Disc Shop, 1815 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C.

2) View filmstrips on the zoo or zoo animals and then draw pictures of zoo animals.

SEND HOME IDEAS:
Encourage parents to take their child back to the zoo for a family picnic. The whole family can enjoy identifying animals and help the young child increase his store of names.

Month: April Day #2B Program Enrichment Papers

Counting Animals

CURRICULUM APPROACH:
Subject matter

GOAL:
Learning number concepts from one to five.

MATERIALS NEEDED:
Extra adults and cars needed to help with a trip to the zoo. The Book Your Big Backyard by National Geographic. Teacher resources: World Book Encyclopedia Volume Z "Zoo" and Childcraft Encyclopedia Volume A "Animals." Toy zoo animals or puppets and a cardboard box or strips of paper.

TIME NEEDED:
2 hours for the trip to the zoo, 10 minutes at circle time, 5 minutes during free choice time.

HOW TO DO IT:

1) Practice counting from one to five anything and everything for several days before the trip.

2) Lay strips of paper on the floor or use a cardboard box to be a "cage" during circle time. Place varying numbers up to five of toy animals in it and have children take turns counting the animals in the cage. Continue this during free choice time.

3) Share pictures and information about zoo animals with the children from the encyclopedias or books.

4) Visit the zoo. Count the number of animals in each cage up to five.

EVALUATION:
Were some of the children able to count the animals accurately?

AGE:
4, 5

EASIER AND HARDER IDEAS:

1) Count the number of animals in each cage at the zoo and in the classroom up to three.

2) Ask children to draw five animals they saw at the zoo.

SEND HOME IDEAS:
Ask parents to count up to five objects with their children. Suggest counting soup cans, steps, laundry, mittens - almost anything will do. This can be a clean-up game; "Can you pick up five toys off the floor?" Encourage parents to have pick up time be number time.

Categorizing Large and Small Animals

CURRICULUM APPROACH:
Process approach

GOAL:
Observing various characteristics of zoo animals, categorizing large and small animals.

MATERIALS NEEDED:
Visit to the zoo in Days 2A and 2B, record "A Trip to the Zoo" by Young People's Records.

HOW TO DO IT:

1) Ask the children to name the large zoo animals.

2) Ask the children to name the small zoo animals.

3) Ask different children to choose and act out their favorite zoo animal. Observe and comment on the various characteristics of the animals.

4) Play the record "Trip to the Zoo" and act it out.

TIME NEEDED:
15 minutes during circle time.

EVALUATION:
Did most of the children get the large and small animals in the correct category?

AGE:
3, 4, 5

EASIER AND HARDER IDEAS:

1) Ask children to draw a picture of their favorite zoo animal.

2) Make a mural showing the different animals with all the children planning and cooperating on it. Glue dried twigs and grass to the mural to make the earth more interesting.

SEND HOME IDEAS:
Ask parents to talk about large and small matching or similar objects with their children. Encourage them to read "The Three Bears" to their children.

Have a Happy Summer

CURRICULUM APPROACH:
Activity, Subject Matter and Process Approaches

GOAL:
Finding an interesting activity learning experience for each day.

MATERIALS NEEDED:
An adult to read the activity of the day to the child, other materials as listed, ditto machine or xerox to copy this sheet to send home with all the children.

TIME NEEDED:
5 minutes a day.

HOW TO DO IT:

1) Ask the children to do one activity a day.

2) Ask them to look at the number for the day of the activity, and cross it off when they do it.

3) Sing the alphabet song with the children. Encourage them to print their names.

4) Send home the following activities for the days listed.

AGE:
4, 5, 6

SEND HOME IDEAS:

June 10. Get a library card from the library or bookmobile. Choose a book.

June 11. Make your own bed and put away all your things.

June 12. Sing the alphabet song with your Mom or Dad.

June 13. Do 5 jumping jacks. Hop 5 times on your left foot and 5 times on your right foot.

June 14. Write the numbers 0-5. Draw a set of something to go with each set.

June 15. Listen to a story someone will read to you. Tell the story back to them.

June 16. Ask for a 10¢ or 20¢ a week allowance.

June 17. Buy something that costs less than your allowance. Ask Mom to tell you how much money you have left.

June 18. On Father's Day do something special for your Dad.

June 19. Make a sandwich. Get someone to cut it in the middle. Cut the pieces in the middle. How many pieces do you have?

June 20. Set the table for your Mother. Be sure to give everyone everything they will need.

June 21. Print as many of the capital letters as you can.

June 22. Draw a pretty summer picture. What is today?

June 23. Find 5 pretty stones. How many different sets can you make using them?

June 24. Find 10 pretty stones. How many different sets can you make using them?

June 25. Practice printing your name.

June 26. Write the numbers 0-10. Draw a set of something to go with each number.

June 27. Plan a summer picnic. Draw a picture of what you would like to eat.

June 28. Look for 5 pretty flowers. Don't pick them before you ask someone.

June 29. Tell stories about the pictures or "read" a nursery rhyme book to someone.

June 30. Do 10 jumping jacks. Hop 10 times on your left foot and 10 times on your right foot.

Dear Teacher:

Thank you for your work with children. Did you know this is some of the most important work in the world? You are making a contribution to the future every day.

Thanks again,

Cynthia Jones

Cynthia Jones, Ph.D.
Director, ECEA Institute

Month: July Day 1st to the 31st Program Enrichment Papers

More Happy Summer Days

CURRICULUM APPROACH:
Activity, Subject Matter and Process approaches

GOAL:
Finding an interesting activity/learning experience for each day.

MATERIALS NEEDED:
An adult to read the activity of the day to the child, other materials as listed, copying facilities to copy this sheet and send home with all the children.

TIME NEEDED:
5 minutes a day.

HOW TO DO IT:

1) Ask the children to do one activity a day.

2) Ask them to cross off the activity number when they have done it.

AGE:
4, 5

SEND HOME IDEAS:

July 1. Make a July calendar. Draw a picture of the weather each day on your calendar.

July 2. This is a good day to help your mother do whatever she is doing.

July 3. Sit very still in your yard for 5 minutes. Draw a picture of things you see and hear.

July 4. Happy Independence Day! Find out how old America is today.

July 5. Watch the clouds. What kinds of sky animals can you see?

July 6. Look for insects and see if you can find one you can name.

July 7. Get a big pan of water. Find 5 things that sink and 5 things that float.

July 8. Count all the doors in your house. Draw a house with one more door.

July 9. Say the alphabet to someone. How many letter sounds can you say?

July 10. Tell your Mom and Dad how much you love them. Do something nice to show them.

July 11. Write all the numbers 0-15. Make a set of stones to go with each number 5.

July 12. Have you been to the library or bookmobile lately? Read or look at a good book.

July 13. Make a sandwich. Can you cut it to make 2 rectangles? 4 rectangles? Get Mom to cut it for you.

July 14. Get a long piece of string. Measure your table. Find 5 things that are not as wide. Keep your string!

July 15. Draw a picture of everything you eat today. Did you eat a lot?

July 16. Make a purchase with your allowance. Save up 2 weeks allowance if you need to.

July 17. Are you making your bed and putting your things away every day? Start today if you are not doing this yet.

July 18. Make a picture. Use only red and yellow. Is there another color on your paper?

July 19. Count all the doorknobs in your house. Are there more doors or doorknobs?

July 20. How many different leaves can you find in your yard? Ask someone if you can pick them. Trace around them and color them.

July 21. Ask your Mom to buy a melon and let you make melon balls for dinner. Make a set of 5 for each family member.

July 22. Take a paper bag outside and collect 10 interesting things. Tell someone about them.

July 23. Get your piece of string. Measure your arm. Find 10 things that are shorter.

July 24. Practice printing your name.

July 25. Take a walk around your yard. How many insects do you see? Don't bother them.

July 26. Get your piece of string. Measure your foot. Find 10 things that are larger.

July 27. Write as many of the small letters of the alphabet as you can.

July 28. Ask Mom if you can stay up late to listen to all the night sounds. Do you know what they are?

July 29. Count all the windows in your house. Are there less windows than doors?

July 30. Have you read a library book lately? Read one to your Mom or Dad.

July 31. Look at your July calendar. Are there more sunny days or more rainy days? Less rainy days or less cloudy days?

Dear Teacher:

Thank you for your work with children. Did you know this is some of the most important work in the world? You are making a contribution to the future every day.

Thanks again,

Cynthia Jones

Cynthia Jones, Ph.D.
Director, ECEA Institute

Month: August Day 1st to the 30th Program Enrichment Papers

Happy August Days

CURRICULUM APPROACH:
Activity, Subject Matter and Process approaches

GOAL:
Learning or doing one interesting thing each day.

MATERIALS NEEDED:
As listed.

TIME NEEDED:
5 minutes a day.

HOW TO DO IT:

1) Xerox or ditto this sheet and send it home with all the children.

2) Ask them to do one activity a day.

AGE:
4, 5

SEND HOME IDEAS:

August 1. Sit very still in your yard. How many different bird songs do you hear?

August 2. Set the table for all the meals today. Don't forget anything.

August 3. Make a picture. Use only yellow and blue. Do you see another color?

August 4. Ask Mom for an old magazine. Find 5 pictures that begin like "sun." Cut them out.

August 5. How many stones do you need to make 5 sets with 2 stones in each set? Try it!

August 6. Make a picture of the sky after a storm. Is there a rainbow?

August 7. Draw a picture of what you would like to do on your vacation.

August 8. Ask Mom for some grocery boxes to play store with.

August 9. Have you gone to the library or bookmobile lately? Read a book to someone.

August 10. Count all the chairs in your house. Can you write the number?

August 11. Draw a picture. Use only the shapes of a circle, a square, a triangle and a rectangle. Ask Mom to draw these shapes for you to help you remember.

August 12. Read a nursery rhyme book to a friend.

August 13. Do something special for your Mom. Don't forget to tell her how much you love her.

August 14. Count all the beds in your house. Are there more beds or more chairs?

August 15. Ask Mom if you can have a goldfish in a glass bowl. Give him a name.

August 16. Practice printing your name. Learn to print the goldfish's name.

August 17. Use your magazine. Find or draw 3 things that rhyme with can. Now find 3 things that rhyme with tree.

August 18. Make a sandwich. Can you cut it to make 2 triangles? 4 triangles? Get Mom to help you cut it.

August 19. Do you still have the string? Measure how high the sofa is. Measure 3 things that are higher.

August 20. Ask Mom if you can go to the grocery store with her. Ask her if you can put 3 things in the basket.

August 21. Show Mom how well you can make your own bed.

August 22. Find 12 stones. Make 6 sets with 2 stones in each set. Make 4 sets with 3 stones in each set. Can you do it other ways?

August 23. Say the alphabet to yourself. Say it again to someone else.

August 24. Count all the months until Christmas. Say the names of all the months that you can.

August 25. Draw a picture of what today's weather is like. Can you do one every day?

August 26. Count all the rooms in your home. Which room is largest? Smallest? Longest? Shortest?

August 27. Help your Dad do whatever he is doing today. Tell him how much you love him.

August 28. Ask Mom if you can have a bucket of water outside. Float a boat or leaves in it.

August 29. With a rock or chalk make lines on the sidewalk. Make 5 lines. Then add 5 more.

August 30. See if the whole family can plan a picnic. Help Mom make a list of what you need.

Have a Happy Year!

14 Volunteer Program Papers (VPP)--Classroom Volunteers

Parent Involvement Helps Teachers and Children:
Possibilities for Volunteers and Paid Aides in Child Care Centers and Public Schools
(School-Wide Concept or Individual Teacher)

These checklists and tips for starting and operating a Volunteer Program in schools and other programs, are taken from a volunteer newsletter we wrote, and from interviews with successful program personnel.

14 Volunteer Program Papers (VPPs)--Classroom Volunteers

Parent Involvement Helps Teachers and Children:
Possibilities for Volunteers and Paid Aides in Child Care Centers and Public Schools
(School-Wide Concept or Individual Teacher)

A children's classroom is busy at work time. The paint spills at the easel, the tape or record at the listening station needs changing, Suzy needs her smock buttoned, and the guinea pig is suddenly loose. The extra pair of hands that a teacher so often needs can be available through a Volunteer Helper program.

Since extra pairs of hands are especially needed during September, recruiting of Volunteer Helpers is best done during the spring. If a center or school doesn't get that early a start the fall is also a good time. (Remind prospective volunteers that they must have a TB test, if it is necessary in your state).

A volunteer coordinator (which could be a parent) sets up the schedules and plans monthly in-service training meetings at a nearby home or at the school from 3 to 4 p.m. or after the center day. An assistant coordinator duplicates the materials given out in training and plans with the coordinator and the teachers for the content of the meetings. (Mathematics readiness? Language readiness? Are the paint cans too full?)

Orientation meetings for new volunteers are held before the program starts with teachers attending and the coordinator giving instructions, such as: Be on time; If you can't come, exchange your day with another volunteer; Never discuss the children outside of class; Call the teacher for any disciplinary action.

The teachers go over the goals of the program for the children, the helpers, and the teachers and together the group reviews the "Rules of the Road" and "Tips for Conversations" (included in this section) to set the tone and provide the facts needed by the helpers.

Later meetings (to which small children of the volunteers are invited in order to prevent babysitting problems) can deal with areas of curriculum learning, so that volunteers may become even more useful, by, for example, suggesting a domino game and knowing that this is appropriate to mathematics readiness.

The format of these meetings is generally: 1) Science (or whatever) readiness in kindergarten; 2) How the aides can help at school (direct children to the nature table, use the computer with a child, use the magnifying glass, etc.); 3) What parents can do at home in this field (discuss form changing when scrambling eggs, talk about seeds and leaves when raking leaves together). There is a mutual discussion of these projects with interesting questions and comments. Parent education is achieved at the same time volunteers are becoming better trained for their jobs. As one parent put it: "Now when my child wants to help me in the kitchen, I think of it as science readiness rather than as a nuisance." These principles can also be applied by individual teachers in their own classrooms or by groups of two or three teachers.

Ways Teachers Can Contribute to the Program

1. Fill out the questionnaire of your needs carefully. Think about the ways you would feel comfortable having a volunteer help you. Do bulletin board work? Perhaps you want him or her to come twice a week during afternoon time? Could he or she give nominal supervision to the class while you work with a small group or individual who needs help in math?

2. Attend at least one session of the volunteer aide training program, if one is already in place, so that you are familiar with the training being given. You will probably want to add to what's been said, but do make sure you know something about the philosophy of the entire program.

3. Accept invitations - or offers - to discuss your volunteer needs at an orientation meeting. (Incidentally, a panel is an interesting way to present different needs).

4. Meet with your volunteer aide to discuss scheduling and duties, even if these details have been partly prearranged.

5. Let the volunteer aide know in advance if you won't need him or her during a certain week.

6. Make an effort to chat with the coordinator periodically. He or she would like to hear your point of view, and is interested in your suggestions for making the program better.

What Kinds of Help are Needed?

(An example of the job descriptions that a steering committee can provide)

Note: Most volunteers prefer to give one morning or one afternoon per week. Hence, most jobs are described to coincide with this preference.

STORY AIDES - to take down stories dictated by the children. One person; two to three hours per week; responsible to the classroom teacher.

ART AIDES - to oversee the children using art materials and to keep materials in order; to help change bulletin boards and displays throughout the school. One person; three to four hours per week; responsible to a teacher or a team coordinator.

CARPENTRY AIDES - to make scenery and play props, storage boxes, etc. May work at home as needed; responsible to the aide coordinator.

BOOK MAKERS - to bind children's writings into book form. Three to four hours per week; responsible to the librarian.

MUSIC AIDES- to play piano or guitar and lead the children in singing. Three hours per week; responsible to team coordinator.

COMPUTER TUTORS - to work with the child using the different types of software available.

TYPISTS - to type for teachers or children (for the center or school newspapers, plays), etc. Three hours per week; responsible to aide or teacher coordinator.

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIAL AIDES - to get assignments from the instructional materials coordinator (who has received requests from teachers) to mount magazine pictures, make puppets, costumes, flash cards, games, charts. May work at home; three hours per week.

READING TUTORS - to work under supervision of the reading or classroom teacher with individual children or with small groups. Three hours per week.

RESOURCE PEOPLE - to serve as experts in a particular subject or interest area; to talk with a class or teachers as requested, or on a continuing basis (visiting classrooms regularly to help children grow plants, for example) or to conduct classes in cooking, sewing, or other areas of interest as the resource person's schedule will allow. Three hours per week or on a one-time-only basis.

As always, the teacher has the responsibility for planning and providing the instructional program and designing the activities which the volunteer carries through.

Parents in the Room...What Happens to the Child?

In setting up Volunteer Helper programs, some teachers prefer not to have a parent working in his or her own child's room. The coordinator, of course, respects this preference. However, it has been found that some parents can work in their child's room without undue disruption, "clinging", or other undesirable behaviors.

Often the parent him/herself will sense which child of his/hers they can work successfully alongside of and which child would respond uncomfortably to his/her presence. In today's creative schools, many children might take note of their parent's presence the first one or two times scheduled, but continue busily with their own work. If this type of scheduling does not seem to be working out after three or four helper scheduling periods, then the coordinator reserves the right, as in all cases, to change the helper to another room or task.

What happens to the child? Often he or she benefits - or he or she is proud of his/her work and class. The parent helper benefits from the weekly hour in a different perspective gaining insight into child guidance techniques. With proper structure, training, and guidelines, many successful programs have been built on direct parent involvement.

Steering Committee Helps Volunteer Programs Grow

"A classroom volunteer program must start small and grow gradually" believes Sue Rich, coordinator of one successful volunteer program. The steering committee that works with Sue wholeheartedly agrees. Established to provide regular communication between the professionals and the volunteer staff, the steering committee includes teachers and Directors. However, the school's teachers, volunteers, curricula and neighborhoods are all changing and as its volunteer program grows, the committee membership will change also.

The members of the steering committee provided the following services:

1. Using a questionnaire, they found out which teachers wanted volunteer aides, and the types of duties they wanted the volunteers to perform in the classrooms. Then, they developed job descriptions from this information - spending quite a lot of time to do this carefully.

2. They distributed a questionnaire to parents to find out who would be interested in helping in specific ways. Included in this qustionnaire was the opportunity to learn to use a personal computer as part of the training. (Keeping the program relevant to volunteer interests was very important.) This questionnaire was handed out at a volunteers orientation meeting in the fall. A booklet describing the philosophy of the school or center and details of the volunteer program was given out at the meeting. (Some volunteers decided NOT to sign up after reading the booklet. However, the committee felt this, too, was good.)

3. The steering committee screened the questionnaires carefully and assigned volunteers to the teachers.

4. The members set up an interview between the teacher and the volunteer.

5. If problems arose, the coordinator counseled with both parties and helped them to work together. Her extra effort was an important factor in the success of the program. "Of course", says Peg Rich, "sometimes I counseled a volunteer right out of the program if she or he wasn't working out well." Peg also stresses the importance of coordinators and volunteers maintaining a professional attitude about their jobs, and not discussing personalities at all outside of the program. Peg says, "sometimes I feel a part of neither world. There's so much you can't tell parents, and so many things you can't tell teachers."

Checklist for Coordinators

1. Set up a steering committee. This must include teachers (we recommend at least three) as well as the Director and/or Assistant Director, the coordinator, and the various program chairpersons (instructional materials, classroom aides, art center, etc.). This group will prepare job descriptions, with teachers' input, and screen volunteers for various positions. The steering committee may also:

--Provide regular reports on each program, with attention to any problems. (Each teacher and chairperson can give a brief report at each meeting.)
--Design forms to be used in the instructional materials and clerk-typist programs, making sure the instructions are clear to both teachers and aides.
--Report feedback from staff meetings, and plan presentations for future staff meetings.
--Provide opportunities for parents and teachers to come together-allowing the aide coordinator to plan monthly in-service training meetings with the teacher, for example.
--Design new questionnaires or announcements for various aide groups, the newsletter, or the staff.
--Design and plan a workshop about the total volunteer program for teachers and parents.

2. Send questionnaires to teachers asking about their volunteer needs. Chat with them personally if necessary.

3. Meet with the Director and steering committee to plan an orientation meeting (see Hints for Volunteers, a part of an Orientation Meeting Agenda, elsewhere in this section.)

4. Prepare the materials to be given out at the fall orientation meeting. These could include (1) A brochure of job descriptions. (2) An orientation booklet including the philosophy of the school and listing pointers for parents. (3) A questionnaire on the volunteer's interests, time available, ability to babysit, previous experience with children.

5. Plan with the Director (and steering committee) to provide some orientation for teachers about the volunteer program. This could include:

--the opportunity for teachers to discuss where, what, when, and why they might want volunteers.
--distribution of the orientation materials that volunteer aides receive.
--an explanation for teachers of why parents volunteer and how to use them to best advantage. It is important for teachers to understand that parents and teachers have a mutual interest in the school or program community.

6. Keep a supply of little jobs on hand, so that volunteers can do something useful even if a plan with a teacher doesn't materialize some particular morning. This technique gets odd jobs done and insures the volunteer's continuing interest. Instructional materials lend themselves beautifully to this category.

Helpful Hints for Training Parents and Volunteer Helpers

(These may be distributed and/or used as part of the orientation meeting agenda).

* The aim of the program is to aide the teachers. Volunteers receive no pay, but, hopefully, do merit appreciation. The volunteer motto is "A job worth doing is a job worth doing well." When a volunteer is happy it benefits the whole center or school.

* Everyone in the program is responsible to another person, as in any professional organization.

* Volunteers are responsible for rescheduling their service times or arranging a switch with another aide, depending on the program they're in, if they have to miss a scheduled time. Let the teacher know of the change.

* Aides may help remind children to behave appropriately, but must assume no responsibility for disciplinary measures. They should call a teacher if such action is necessary.

* The coordinator is the person to contact for help. Teachers or volunteers should contact the coordinator when they have a question, a serious problem, a suggestion, or a complaint. Volunteers must maintain a professional attitude. There is no place for gossip in the program.

* Since volunteers and professional staff are working together to benefit the children, both groups of adults must be flexible enough to work together for their common goal. When there is a personality clash, the coordinator is the person who should be contacted to solve it. Teachers and volunteers should call her immediately for a change of station or personnel.

* The coordinator tries to honor volunteers' preferences for jobs. However if one art aide is needed and six people want the job, obviously they can't all have it. Coordinators may have to change people from time to time as needed, within their time choices.

* Volunteers must be careful not to discuss any child. Criticism should remain in the school or center, even contstructive criticism.

* Volunteers should chat with the coordinator periodically. He or she welcomes their suggestions for making the program better.

* Volunteers must have a chest x-ray, if it is required.

Rules of the Road for the Novice Volunteer

Sample rules of the road from one Volunteer Helper Program might be adapted for use in your program with appropriate changes made by your teachers and okayed by your Director.

Sand table and work bench activities:
To be used only during work time. Work bench activities must be supervised by an adult and only four children may be there at one time. The children may paint their woodworking project. The child paints on the floor, putting down newspaper. He takes only one can of paint (from the easel) at a time, returning it before choosing another color. When painting, the child must wear his smock. Growth in responsibility comes with the child's getting the newspaper, paint and smock himself and returning them to the proper place when finished with that activity.

Easel painting:
Paints will be placed in the easel for use at work time every day unless the whole group is participating in a painting activity. Children wear the provided smocks. Paints are left in the juice cans and stored in the sink cupboard at the end of the day. In the morning check the amount (half full) and the consistency and place the paint in the easel, adding to it if needed.

Blocks, toys, and games:
During free work time, each child chooses his activity. However he may not move on to another activity until he has put away the equipment he is using. Blocks should be grouped by size and shape. Because of limited space, only two children may play in each of the two block areas, two children with the railroad set, four in the housekeeping corner, two with the guinea pigs, two with tinker toys, flannel board, and magnetic numbers and shapes.

Children may use the bathroom as needed, but they are discouraged from going during rest time. Only one child uses the bathroom at a time, except in emergency. Check on the child if he or she stays in the bathroom for an unusual length of time. Insist that the child wash his or her hands after using the toilet. Children may also wash hands at the sink but encourage them to wash quickly so those waiting may have a turn.

The role of the volunteer helper will be that of one who stays unobtrusively in the background. Resist an urge to step into a situation too quickly, thus depriving the child of an educative experience. Instead of buttoning or zipping the child's jacket, show the child how he or she can start it, or try talking the child through it as s/he attempts it. Cheerful encouragement and praise will produce amazing results, not the least being the child's satisfaction derived from doing it himself or herself!

A few general suggestions: Write the child's name and date on art work. Don't suggest what to draw or make. Do not ask the child what he is drawing or making, he may be simply trying out the medium. Listen to the child if he wishes to talk about his work. If a child loses interest or forgets about self-control, direct him to another activity or another play area.

Tips for Conversations

1. Adults should keep voices low. Squat or use a low chair when talking to the children. Listen to the children. Learn from them. Talking at the children bores them.

2. Do not disturb a child unnecessarily. When he or she is looking for approval, use generalities not comparisons: "what a fine building" or "what nice colors."

3. Establish possessions and turns by saying, "he is using it now, you may use it later."

4. Give sincere approval when a child meets a difficult situation: "good idea."

5. Admit "that really did hurt," if a child falls or hurts himself.

6. Try to anticipate the deterioration of group play. The right suggestion at the right time will help.

7. Be careful not to discuss any child (in his or her presence or any other time).

8. State suggestions in a positive manner. For example, "Let's wash hands" or "We paint on paper." With this approach, you are less likely to arouse resistance.

9. Use a positive tone of voice where no choice is given. "Rest time now." Where there is a choice, phrase it so: "Would you like to pass the crayons?"

10. Negative approach should be used only for important or dangerous situations: "You may not throw blocks." To a child who is tempted to throw a rock: "Balls are for throwing, not rocks."

VPP-9

Goals of the Early Childhood Program Experience

For Children

- Be themselves.
- Express themselves through using art and play materials freely and constructively.
- Learn to be tolerant, creative, cooperative, and imaginative.
- Learn independence.
- Learn limits of behavior.
- Increase ability to handle emotions constuctively.

For Volunteer Helpers

- Become more aware of child's world and understand his or her behavior.
- Achieve a more positive approach to our child-adult relationships through professional guidance and shared experiences with other parents.
- Be sympathetic, understanding a child's first experience away from home.
- Provide worthwhile outlet for energies and abilities of parents outside of the home.
- Learn constructive techniques of working with children.

What We Teach

- Is not evident to the casual observer.
- Setting the stage means guiding unobtrusively.
- Maintaining an atmosphere of freedom and friendliness within limits.
- Mostly, allowing the children to develop their own ideas but with the adults in the background ready to help if needed.

Instructional Materials--One Way to Get Started

A teacher can't work without materials. Surrounded by puppets lined up in plastic bags, window shades that pull down to show number charts, and parents busily laminating puzzles and pictures, we began to see that the term "materials" covers a pretty wide range.

Volunteer parents have produced instructional materials related to visual perception, cognitive skills (association, classification, memory, interpretation), language and math development, creative play, as well as materials and equipment - i.e., listening stations, puppets, flannel board stories, picture files, puzzles, tables for sitting or writing, puppet stages, number boards, "cookie" crayons, etc.

Program parents and administrators cooperatively nominate two volunteer parents who serve as co-chairpersons of the program where the instructional materials are made. One of the main characteristics of a good co-chairperson is "public relations" talents (salesmanship). The co-chairperson helps to tell the community about the program via letters, telephone, or personal contacts with parents, and also recruits and schedules sufficient volunteers to produce the instructional materials.

Professional staff members create models of the instructional material to be made. Members of the instructional advisory committee (teachers and administrators) decide which instructional materials should be made, taking into account the cost of production, how and how often the item can be used for the instructional program in the school or center, and how many people will use it. As they are produced, the materials are housed in the resource media center for loaning out under the same procedure as library books.

The Educational Director is responsible for coordinating and supervising the work of the volunteer parents - including instruction the parents, laying out the work and materials to be used, purchasing raw materials such as window shades or linoleum, making a model for the parents from teachers' rough drafts, etc.

All program teachers check out materials from the resource center with library cards (in pockets glued right to the plastic bags) for an indeterminate length of time. Children may also check out these materials.

The philosophy behind the "check out" procedure is that the parents can find the job more satisfying if they can see numerous teachers and children using the instructional materials which they have made. Central storage also insures more efficient use of these instructional resources.

A good and orderly check-out system, including an overall catalog of the total number of each item, and perhaps a code for types of item, is a must. A smaller and newer instructional materials program at another program purchased a file cabinet to store "made" materials. Shelves are good too.

At some schools, a parent "instructional materials coordinator" assumes the job of Educational Director described above. The parent coordinator meets regularly with the volunteer aide committee, which includes the Director and at least three teachers.

Tips on Getting Organized

In the beginning of most instructional materials programs, a certain amount of "selling" is needed. One program started with puppets, flannel board characters and a picture file. As the teachers begin to see the excellent products that parents are willing to turn out and see colleagues using these items and requesting new items, the requests and ideas will grow. Note: the professional person should always be the one to determine all the details of a given product.

A flyer sent to parents followed by an orientation coffee is a good way to recruit volunteers and parents willing to work as instructional materials aides. Sign-up sheets should include room for a variety of interests - sewing, printing, pasting, etc. - or even babysitting for others. Some groups meet at the school or center, if there is room to work. Some meet in a home weekly and some work individually.

One school that was starting an instructional materials program, with no school secretary to help or room to work in, used the following procedures:

1. The coordinator met with the Director to determine how costs were to be met. The Director underwrote the program to the extent of $100 and requested that the coordinator make up a list of needs to help determine future underwriting, at a later date, when he/she had more of a "feel" for the requirements. They decided which items would be purchased through the center and which items the parent coordinator should buy.
2. The coordinator decided to keep the supply of materials in her home, to be delivered or picked up by the volunteers working on certain projects. (There was no room at this center. It is generally agreed that a room at the center is a better way, if such a room is available.)
3. A teacher needing something (three charts, for example) would fill out a form listing his/ her name and class, a brief description of the charts desired, date needed, and indicating he/she would either call the volunteer at home about the project, or giving his/her phone number so the volunteer could call him/her. This form was placed in the coordinator's box in the office.
4. The coordinator received the request and assigned a volunteer. She first checked with the volunteer about the acceptability of the assignment (time, interests, etc) and explained the project, then returned the name and phone number of the volunteer on the form to the teacher.
5. The teacher and volunteer picked a date and time for the volunteer to come in and look at sample charts and receive information about the details of the new charts. (This school discovered that a self-explanatory item, like ten bean bags, needs no personal interview if good instructions about size and material were sent.)
6. Frequently, a teacher and a volunteer developed a special rapport and continued on to other projects together. (However, it was found that it was best for the teacher to submit another form requesting that volunteer in order to prevent the volunteer from being led into a larger commitment than she had originally planned.)

The Volunteer-Crafted Instructional Material Product: What If It Isn't Good Enough?

What do you do if a product comes in that isn't good enough? Perhaps the workmanship isn't good, or perhaps a chart is written in script. Or perhaps it is some other problem related to misunderstood directions.

One school accepts everything the parent does with thanks, and then assigns this worker to an easier task or job. It is generally agreed that you must never criticize the volunteer or ask her to re-do the project. Ask another volunteer to re-do it, if necessary. But also take the time to review your instruction giving channels.

Perhaps the coordinators need to get additional details from certain teachers who haven't time to write down specific instructions. Perhaps certain people work better in a group with patterns cut out and materials already assembled. (These might include felt, liquid embroidery, sequins etc. for flannel board characters. Note: many programs make two of every flannel board set and use double felt for extra durability.)

An evaluation sheet used regularly with each project, for parents and for teachers, gives valuable clues about what constitutes a successful instructional materials program. Use of these sheets, such as the one printed elsewhere in this section. Also have a group evaluation of the entire program once or twice a year, so that new ideas may be included and old problems solved.

Sample Evaluation Sheet

(Note: Add questions to these samples based on your own school or program needs)

For the Teacher

1. Did this project meet your need? If not, why not?

2. Did you write or call in instructions? Did you discuss the project personally with the coordinator or volunteer? Which do you prefer?

3. Was the request sheet clear and sufficient?

4. Did you get the project on time?

For the Volunteer

1. Were the instructions clear?
   Oral_________
   Written_______
   In person______

2. Did the project take more time, less time than expected?

3. Is this the type of thing you enjoy doing?

4. What else would you prefer?

Reader Response Form

Date:________ Please check one: Fall____ Spring ____ Summer ____ 19____.

Title ________________________ Cover color __________.

Thank you for your interest and enthusiasm for helping parents and children.. We are asking you to fill in this questionnaire to help us evaluate and improve our materials.

I. How did you learn about the HLE MANUAL?

Where else do you suggest we send brochures? (Please record names and addresses):

II. Did the HLE MANUAL meet your expectations?
____ completely, ____ nearly completely, ___ adequately, ___ to a limited extent, ___ not at all.

Did at least some of the parents do some of the activities?

Did you receive responses back from the parents?

III. Which topic was of most interest to you?

What do you suggest be added to the topics?

IV. The learning opportunities in this HLE MANUAL in relation to other materials for parent use were:

1	2	3	4	5
much greater	greater	about the same	less	much less

Overall, I would rate the materials:

1	2	3	4	5
excellent	good	satisfactory	poor	cannot say

VI. Please describe how this HLE MANUAL was of value to you:

VII. What, if anything, do you plan to do differently as a result of the HLE MANUAL?

VIII. Are you interested in purchasing future, updated HLE MANUALs?____________________

Would you recommend the HLE MANUAL to a friend?__________________.

IX. What suggestions do YOU have to improve the HLE MANUAL? What topics or Home Learning Enablers would you add?

Thank you for your help. Please use an extra sheet of paper for any further comments, and mail this form to: ECEA Institute,

5150 Marbury Run Road, Box 396
Marbury, MD 20658

HOME LEARNING ENABLERS

The Home Learning Enablers are easy, carefully timed (5-10 minutes each) parent-child activities gathered from a number of sources. Many were tested with 200 children in a pre-test, post-test control group design. In that study, the Stanford Binet IQ test score group average showed a rise of almost 8 points in just 14 weeks

The activities call for materials easily available in the home. Each HLE (Enabler) will feature one activity for all grade levels up to high school, and for preschool ages 3, 4 and 5. Additional HLEs for infants and toddlers are also available. All HLEs have subject area headings. You don't have to spend lots of time and money on parent resources–everything is here.

ECEA INSTITUTE
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Home Learning Enablers and Other Helps

The Author

Cynthia C. Jones Shoemaker: Founder and President of the non-profit Education, Continuing Education, and Administration Institute. Dr. Shoemaker, a graduate of Cornell University in Human Ecology and a 1981 Ph.D. recipient from the University of Maryland, has been co-author of other publications: A Family Affair: Education; Three R's Plus; Leadership and the Use of Power in ECE Administration; and Motivating Staff, Parents, and Children. Currently in press with MacMillan is Administration and Management of Programs for Young Children. She is the originator of programs presented nationwide on parent education and parent involvement. A past President of Parent Cooperative Preschools International, Dr. Shoemaker consults nationally.

Home Learning Enablers

Individual send-home activities. Change the age to fit your children.

--28 for ages 2 to 5
--60 for Kindergarten and Primary Grades
--20 for 3rd to 6th Grade
--12 for Middle Schoolers
--20 for History and Geography-all ages

Parent Papers

18 Handouts or Newsletter inserts (topics include Self-Image, Toys, Reading, Discipline, and Child Development)

Program Enrichment Papers

(PEPS)
--15 Enrichments with three different curriculum approaches for each (use one or all three!)
--90 plus Summer Days Activities to send home

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